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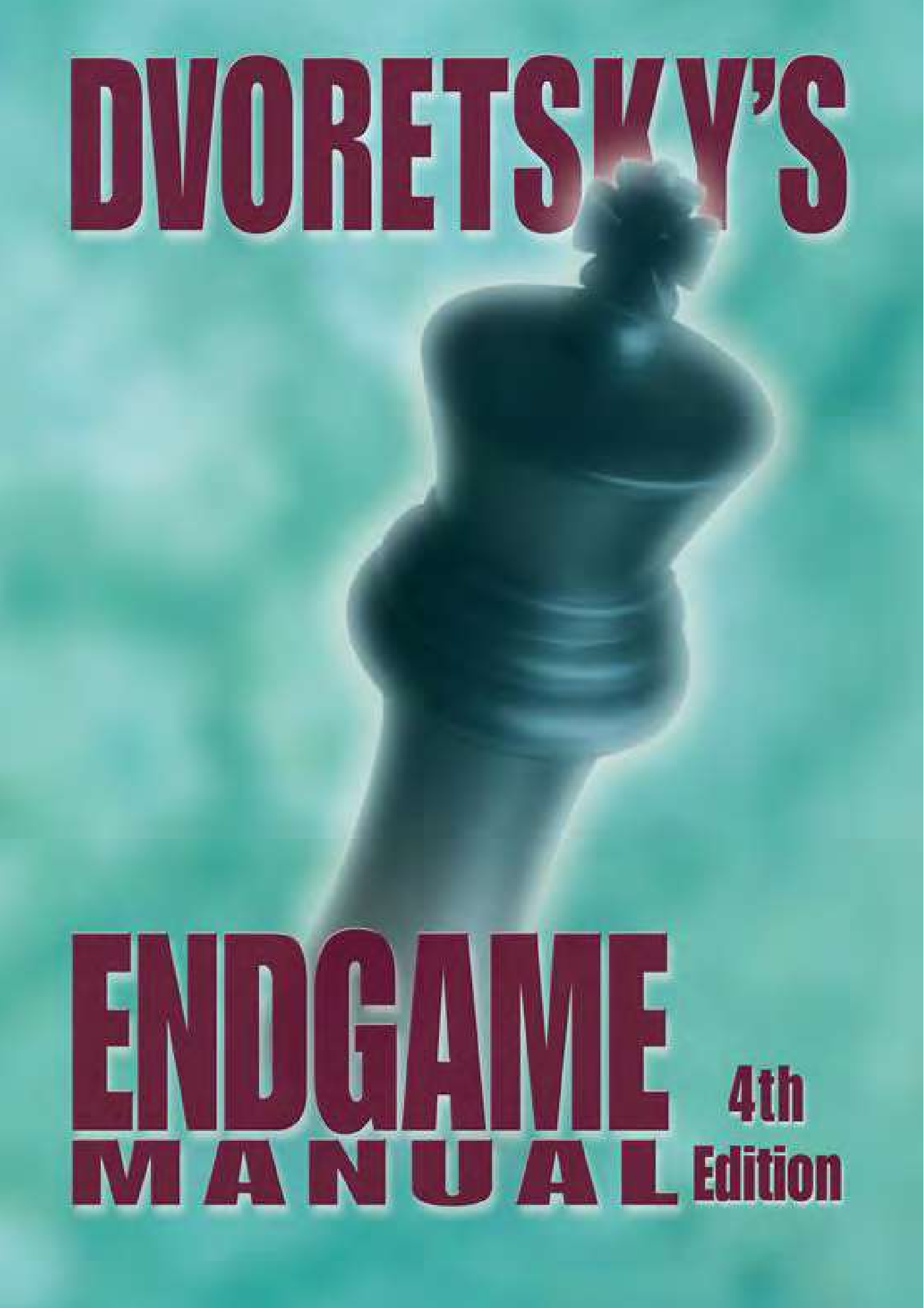

ENDGAME MANUAL

4th Edition

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

Fourth Edition

by
Mark Dvoretsky

Foreword by Artur Yusupov
Preface by Jacob Aagaard

2014
Russell Enterprises, Inc.
Milford, CT USA

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

Fourth Edition

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Mark Dvoretsky

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Foreword

My cooperation and friendship with Mark Dvoretsky has already lasted almost 30 years. He was more than just a coach or second. He was my most important chess teacher. I owe my greatest victories to him and we are still in contact with each other quite often.

Mark has developed a method that can catapult a talented player from Elo 2200 to grandmaster level in 4 to 5 years. An important part of this procedure is the study of the endgame. Mark firmly believes that endgame technique is of universal value. He recognized this when he prepared several endgame sessions for the education of prospective Russian chess trainers. At first he thought that the job was routine work, only requiring him to write down what he already knew. But suddenly he realized that he was playing better!

I also believe in the *interactive* effect of endgame study. It makes it easier to judge and use the potential of the pieces and to understand their interaction. So not only our endgame technique, but also our intuition and positional understanding are refined. In the endgame, plans must be found all the time – so it sharpens our strategic eye as well.

So I was very happy when Mark told me two years ago, that he was planning to write an endgame manual. Now this work by one of the world's leading endgame specialists has appeared and you can enjoy the fruits of his labor. I am sure that those who study this work carefully will not only play the endgame better, but overall, their play will improve. One of the secrets of the Russian chess school is now before you, dear reader!

International Grandmaster Artur Yusupov
Weissenhorn
September 2003

Preface

The first time I heard about the book you are now holding in your hands was in the summer of 2000, when Mark Dvoretsky was giving lectures in Copenhagen for a group of the best Danish players. I had only just been able to put my jaw back in place after being rushed through a rook ending I was badly prepared to understand. What had fascinated me most was not that rook endings could be explained the way Mark explained them, but that the simplicity of dicta like *the rook should always be active* had such far reaching practical implications. *Hey, I can actually understand this!* was the thought running through my head. The game Flohr-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936 (p. 227) especially impressed me. Mark then told us that he was indeed working on a new book on the endgame, a comprehensive manual which would be finished within a year.

In fact it took far more than a year, and to be honest, I am not really sure that Mark will ever finish his work with this book – or that he should. In the summer of 2002 the German version, titled *Die Endspieluniversität,* was published. And I am the proud owner of the first ever signed copy of the book I called *The best chess book ever written* in a 10-page review in the Swedish chess magazine *Schacknytt.*

Since the book was released (and I wrote my review) I have worked with it, in both my own training and my work with juniors, and I have come to the following conclusion: Going through this book will certainly improve your endgame knowledge, but just as important, it will also greatly improve your ability to calculate variations. In particular, the section on pawn endings has convinced me that solving studies and pawn endings should be an important part of my pre-tournament training (and when am I not preparing for the next tournament?). So the book is practical indeed, more so than any other book in my extensive library.

But there is another point, just as important, regarding the general sense of aesthetics in the book. The studies, both those selected and those created by the author himself, are not just instructive, but some of the finest studies I have ever seen.

But what really impresses me is the deep level of analysis in the book. Rules and techniques are important for the practical player in the development of ability, but if the analysis is less than thorough, it is hard to really get into the text. Improvements have been found to the analysis of the German edition and incorporated into the English edition and Mark is always ready to discuss and improve his analysis with anyone. He understands fully that a book has a life and rights of its own. Greatness is possible, but perfection may not be. I must admit that I personally feel as if Shakespeare asked me to write a foreword to Hamlet, and yes, I must admit that I suffer from a lot of confusion as to why he did this. All I can say is: This is a great book. I hope it will bring you as much pleasure as it has me.

International Grandmaster Jacob Aagaard
Copenhagen
September 2003

From the Author (First Edition)

Endgame theory is not a complicated subject to study!

All one needs is thorough knowledge of a limited number of “precise” positions (as a rule, elementary ones) plus some of the most important principles, evaluations, and standard techniques. The question is, how to select the most important material from the thousands of endings analyzed in various handbooks? That is why this book was written: it offers the basic information you need as the foundation of your own personal endgame theory.

As long ago as 1970, when I was just a young chess master and a student at Moscow University, I was unexpectedly invited to give some endgame lectures to the chess faculty of the Moscow High School for Sports. It was then that I had to think about what exactly a practical chess player must study. I defined sound methods of studying endgame theory (from the point of view of logic, rather obvious ones) and prepared examples of the most important types of endgames (pawn, rook-and-pawn endgames, and those with opposite-color bishops). I also prepared a series of lectures on the general principles of endgame play. By the way, the main ideas of that series became (with my permission) the basis of the popular book *Endgame Strategy* by Mikhail Shereshevsky (I recommend that book to my readers).

Later on, these materials, continually corrected and enlarged, were used in teaching numerous apprentices. They proved to be universal and useful for players of widely different levels: from ordinary amateurs to the world’s leading grandmasters. My work with grandmasters, some of them belonging to the world’s Top Ten, have convinced me that almost none of them had studied chess endings systematically. They either did not know or did not remember many important endgame positions and ideas, which can be absorbed even by those of relatively modest chess experience. As a result, even among grandmasters, grave errors occur even in elementary situations: you will find plenty of examples in this book. Some grandmasters asked me to help them, and our studies resulted usually in a substantial improvement of their tournament achievements. Two weeks of intensive study were usually more than enough to eliminate the gaps in their endgame education.

So, what will you find in this book?

Precise positions. This is our term for concrete positions – positions with a minimum number of pawns, which should be memorized and which will serve as guideposts again and again in your games.

The hardest part of preparing this book was deciding which positions to include and which to leave out. This required rejection of many examples that were intrinsically interesting and even instructive, but of little practical value. Common sense dictates that effort should be commensurate to the expected benefit. Human memory is limited, so there is no sense in filling it up with rarely-seen positions that will probably never occur in our actual games. One should study relatively few positions, the most important and most probable, but study and understand them perfectly. One should not remember long and perplexing analyses. We may never have an opportunity to reproduce them in our games, and we will certainly forget them sooner or later. Our basic theoretical knowledge must be easy to remember and comprehend. Some complicated positions are also important, but we may absorb their general evaluations and basic ideas, plus perhaps a few of their most important lines only.

The positions that I consider part of the basic endgame knowledge system are shown by diagrams and comments in blue print. If the explanatory notes are too complicated or less important the print is black; these positions are also useful but there is not much sense in committing them to memory.

Endgame ideas. These represent, of course, the most significant part of endgame theory. Study of certain endgame types can be almost fully reduced to absorbing ideas (general principles, standard methods and evaluations) rather than to memorizing precise positions.

When discussing precise positions, we will certainly point out the endgame ideas in them. But many standard ideas transcend any particular precise position. These ideas should be absorbed with the help of schemata – very simple positions where a technique or a tool works in a distilled form

and our attention is not distracted by any analysis of side lines. Over the course of time we may forget the precise shape of a schema but will still remember the technique. Another method of absorbing endgame ideas is to study practical games or compositions where the ideas have occurred in the most attractive form.

The schemata and the most instructive endgames are represented by color diagrams as well. Plus, important rules, recommendations and names of the important tools are given in ***bold italics***.

As I am sure you realize, the choice of the ideas and precise positions included in this system of basic endgame knowledge is, to some extent, a subjective matter. Other authors might have made slightly different choices. Nevertheless I strongly recommend that you not ignore the blue text: it is very important. However you of course are free to examine it critically, and to enrich it with the other ideas in this book (those in black print), as well as with examples you already know, from other books or your own games.

Retention of the material. This book would have been rather thin if it included only a laconic list of positions and ideas related to the obligatory minimum of endgame knowledge. As you see, this is not so.

Firstly, the notes are definitely not laconic, after all, this is a manual, not a handbook. In a handbook, a solution of a position is all one needs; in a manual, it should be explained how one can discover the correct solution, which ideas are involved.

Secondly, in chess (as in any other sphere of human activity), a confident retention of theory cannot be accomplished solely by looking at one example: one must also get some practical training with it. For this purpose, additional examples (those with black diagrams and print) will be helpful.

You will see instructive examples where the basic theoretical knowledge you have just studied is applied in a practical situation. The connection between the theory and the practical case will not always be direct and obvious. It is not always easy to notice familiar theoretical shapes in a complicated position, and to determine which ideas should be applied in this concrete case. On the other hand, a position may resemble theory very much but some unobvious details exist; one should discover them and find how this difference influences the course of the fight and its final outcome.

Some practical endings are introduced by the “Tragicomedy” heading. These are examples of grave errors committed by various players (sometimes extremely strong ones). The point is not to laugh at them: you know that there are spots even on the sun. These cases are simply excellent warnings against ignoring endgame theory. Additionally, experience shows that these cases tend to be very well remembered by the student, and are therefore very helpful in absorbing and retaining endgame ideas.

Practical training, by which I mean solving appropriate exercises, is essential. You will find a large number and wide variety of exercises in this book, from easy to very difficult. Some solutions are given directly after the exercises, other are placed in the special chapter that concludes the book.

Some exercises do not involve a search for a single correct solution. They are designed for solving in the playing mode, when a series of contingent decisions is required. The best result can be achieved if a friend or coach assists you by referring to the book. But you can also play through the example without assistance, choosing moves for one side and taking the answering moves from the text of the book.

Of course, one need not study all these examples, nor must one solve all the exercises. But still, if you do, your knowledge of the basic theory will be more sound and reliable. Also, self-training develops one’s ability to calculate lines deeply and precisely; this skill is essential for every player.

Analyses. When working on the manuscript, in addition to the large volume of material I had collected myself, I also – quite naturally – used endgame books by other authors. Checking their analyses, I found that an amazingly high number of endings, including many widely known and used in book after book, are analyzed badly and evaluated wrongly. In those cases I went deeper than the concept of the endgame manual required. I felt I had to do it. As I wrote above, studying endgame theory is not a very labor-intensive process, but analysis of a particular endgame, or

practical play under time restriction in a tournament, can be a much more sophisticated and complicated matter. Therefore, my readers will find corrected versions of many interesting endgame analyses, plus some entirely new analyses that are important for endgame theory.

Presentation of the material. The material here is presented mainly in a traditional manner, classified according to the material relationships on the board. First pawn endings are analyzed, then those with minor pieces, then rook-and-pawn, etc. But this method is not followed too strictly. For example, the queen-versus- pawns section is in chapter 1, to demonstrate immediately what can arise in some sharp pawn endings.

In the chapter on pawn endings, you will meet some terms and techniques (such as "corresponding squares," "breakthrough," "shouldering" etc.) that are important for many kinds of endgame. Some of these techniques are illustrated by additional examples with more pieces on the board; as the book continues, we may refer to these cases again.

Some chapters (for example, those on pawn and rook-and-pawn endings) are quite long while others are rather short. Chapter length does not reflect the relative importance of a kind of endgame; rather it has to do with the richness of ideas and number of precise positions required for full understanding.

The final chapter deals with the most general principles, rules and methods of endgame play, such as king's activity, zugzwang, the fortress etc. Of course, these themes appear earlier in the book, but a review of already familiar ideas improves both understanding and retention.

What this book does not contain. Obviously, one cannot embrace the infinite. I have already described how the book's material has been selected. Now about other limitations.

My own formal definition of "endgame" is: the stage of a chess game when at least one side has no more than one piece (in addition to the king). Positions with more pieces are not discussed here (except for cases when the "extra" pieces are exchanged).

Our subject is endgame theory. Some problems of chess psychology that belong to "general endgame techniques" are beyond our discussion. Interested readers may turn to the aforementioned *Endgame Strategy* by Shereshevsky, or to *Technique for the Tournament Player*, a book by this writer and Yusupov.

Special signs and symbols. The role of the blue text in this book has already been explained. Now the time has come to explain special signs and symbols.

To the left of diagrams, you will find important information. First of all, the indication of who is on move: "W" means White and "B" Black.

If a question mark is shown, the position can be used as an exercise. Most often, there is no special explanation of what is expected from the reader – he must make a correct decision on his own, because in an actual game nobody will tell you whether you should play for a draw or for a win, calculate a lot or simply make a natural move. Sometimes, however, a certain hint is included in a verbal question.

Exercises with solutions that are given separately, at the end of the book, have two sets of numbers beside the diagrams. For example, diagram 1-14, the 14th diagram of chapter 1, also has the designation the information given in the 1/1, meaning it is the first such exercise of chapter 1.

The combination "B?/Play" means that the position is designed for replaying, and that you are to take the black pieces.

Beside some black diagrams, the symbol "△" appears. This indicates that the position and the idea behind it have theoretical value, though less compared to those from basic theory (blue diagrams).

Many years ago, the publication *Chess Informant* developed a system of symbols to describe the evaluation of a position or move. This system is widely used now and, with minimal changes, is applied in this book, too.

Finally, a work of this scope cannot be produced by a single individual. I am grateful to many others for their assistance during the many stages of producing this book. I would like to thank Artur Yusupov and Jacob Aagaard for their encouragement and eventual contributions, the Introduction and Preface respectively; Karsten Müller for his help proof-reading the text and checking the accuracy of variations; Taylor Kingston for his assistance editing the final version of

the text; Jim Marfia and Valery Murakhveri for their translations of the original Russian text; Harold van der Heijden for his assistance checking sources; and Hanon Russell, the publisher, for coordinating the efforts of all concerned.

This book is an improved and expanded version of the German-language edition, and in that regard, it is also appropriate to thank Ulrich Dirr, who provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of the German edition and Jürgen Daniel, its publisher. Without their fine work, it would have been significantly more difficult to bring out this English-language edition.

Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow
September 2003

From the Author (Second Edition)

An author usually has a hard time predicting whether his book will be popular; in this case, however, I was confident that *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* would be a success. And it was, as witnessed by the almost uniformly favorable (and in some cases – ecstatic) reviews and the rapidly sold-out first edition. Now, only two years later, it is time to prepare a second edition.

The theory of the endgame is constantly evolving – although not, of course, as fast as opening theory. New instructive endgames are constantly being played and then analyzed; commentaries on endgames played earlier are corrected – in large measure, thanks to the use of rapidly improving computer programs. On the other hand, if we understand endgame theory, not as the mechanical accumulation of all the information we have, but as the results of our consideration of it, then the authors of endgame books (as opposed to the authors of opening books) have no need to be continuously expanding and reworking their texts, since very few new analyses have any practical value in forcing us to reexamine our approaches to the study and play of endgames.

In the past two years, very important discoveries have been made in the theory of one particular area of rook endgames – and I have completely reworked the corresponding chapter of this book. However, there have also been a number of corrections made in other chapters as well – perhaps not as fundamental, and some that are barely noticeable. A few of them involve corrections to the names of players and composers; but most of them, of course, are analytical. And here, the letters from readers to the author and to the publisher, Hanon Russell, have been most valuable. I am truly grateful to everyone who has written to us. All these notes have been considered in the preparation of the new edition – as a result, a number of new names now appear in the index of composers and analysts. Special thanks are due to that exacting aficionado of the endgame, Karsten Müller, who helped me eradicate of a number of inaccuracies and outright errors in the original text, just as he did with the preparation of the first edition.

Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow
September 2005

Publisher’s Note to the Third Edition

It is with a great sense of pride that we present the third edition of *Dvoretsky’s Endgame Manual* by Mark Dvoretsky. When it was first released in 2003, it was embraced by the chess world. Since then, it has set the standard by which all other works on the endgame are measured.

From the outset, the author’s comprehensive coverage of this critical phase of the game has been both staggering in its depth and impressive in its accuracy. However, rather than rest on his laurels, Mark Dvoretsky has continued to re-examine and re-work the material.

The result is this revised and updated third edition. Not only working independently, but also with the help of attentive readers, masters and grandmasters, the author’s efforts have resulted in what can only be described as the definitive work on endgame theory and practice.

No doubt, when confronted by this massive volume, many chessplayers are intimidated. After all, there are over four hundred large-format pages and over one thousand positions contained in the book. Recognizing the challenge set before the reader, and with an eye to making the material accessible to as many players as possible, Dvoretsky devised a system whereby his *Manual* could be effectively used by both those wishing to immerse themselves in theory, as well as those wishing a more practical approach.

The key is the author’s concept of using two colors in the text. If your objective is to study and master all the secrets of the endgame, then go through the entire text thoroughly. On the other hand, if you wish to get practical, working knowledge of endings more quickly, then focus your attention only on the text in blue. Either way, you will be rewarded with better results in your games. That is particularly important in this era of rapid time controls and sudden-death finishes.

We hope you will appreciate the author’s passion for the endgame and dedication to producing the most accurate work possible. Regarded by many as Dvoretsky’s ***magnum opus***, it is truly a masterpiece. We wish you good chess, and, of course, better endgames…

Hanon W. Russell
President, Russell Enterprises, Inc.
Milford, Connecticut, USA
July 2011

From the Author (Fourth Edition)

Readers familiar with previous editions of the *Manual* have probably noticed that the new edition is larger than the previous one. But it is not because its content has been significantly increased or is more complicated – it is not. On the contrary, I have tried to make it more accessible to study, adding about 200 new diagrams to the text. Those who read the book without a board (there are many players who are able to do this) will find it easier to follow complex examples. In addition, the new diagrams will draw your attention to many interesting and instructive moments previously buried in the text and variations.

As always with new editions, I have revised the text with clarifications and corrections which were found since the release of the previous edition. Significant revisions have been made in some aspects of the theory of rook endings. For that, I would like first and foremost to thank the analyst Vardan Pogosyan. In 2011-2012, I actively corresponded with Pogosyan, and he showed me many of the discoveries he had made, leading me to rethink some important theoretical concepts.

Relatively recently the computer database “Lomonosov” was created; it accurately evaluates seven-piece endings (previously only six-figure endings were available). Naturally, I checked the book’s seven-piece examples with the “Lomonosov” database and corrected any errors found.

Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow
September 2014

Other Signs, Symbols, and Abbreviations

!	a strong move
!!	a brilliant or unobvious move
?	a weak move, an error
??	a grave error
!?	a move worth consideration
?!	a dubious move
□	a forced move
=	an equal position
⩲	White stands slightly better
±	White has a clear advantage
+–	White has a winning position
⩱	Black stands slightly better
∓	Black has a clear advantage
–+	Black has a winning position
∞	an unclear position
△	with the threat or idea of
⇄	with counterplay
#	mate
⊙	zugzwang
*	in a game: a position that could arise but did not actually happen
*	in a study: a position that is not an initial one
m	match
wm	match for the world championship
zt	zonal tournament
izt	interzonal tournament
ct	candidates' tournament
cm	candidates' match
ch	championship
ch(1)	championship, 1st league
wch	world championship
ech	European championship
f	final
sf	semifinal
qf	quarterfinal
ol	Olympiad
tt	team tournament
jr	junior competitions
cr	correspondence game
simul	simultaneous display

Chapter 1

Pawn Endgames

Pawn endings are very concrete – even the tiniest change in the position generally alters the shape and outcome of the struggle. Here you can rarely get along on “general principles” – you **must** know how to calculate accurately.

The study of pawn endings chiefly boils down, not to the memorization of exact positions, but to the assimilation of standard techniques, which considerably eases our search for a solution and the calculation of variations.

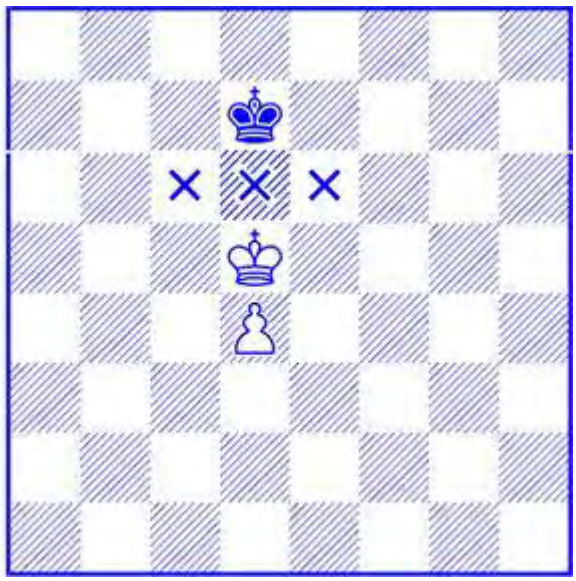
Many pawn endings are clearly defined tempo-battles. In these endgames, speed is everything: which pawn will queen first, will the king come in time to stop the passed pawn or get to the other side of the board in time. And there are other pawn endings in which a maneuvering war predominates, and in which zugzwang assumes paramount importance.

“Maneuvering” endgames are generally more complex than “rapid” ones, but we shall begin with them anyway, in order to acquire the vital concept of “corresponding squares.” Then we shall switch to studying the ideas involved in “rapid” endgames, before returning once again to the “maneuvering.”

Key Squares

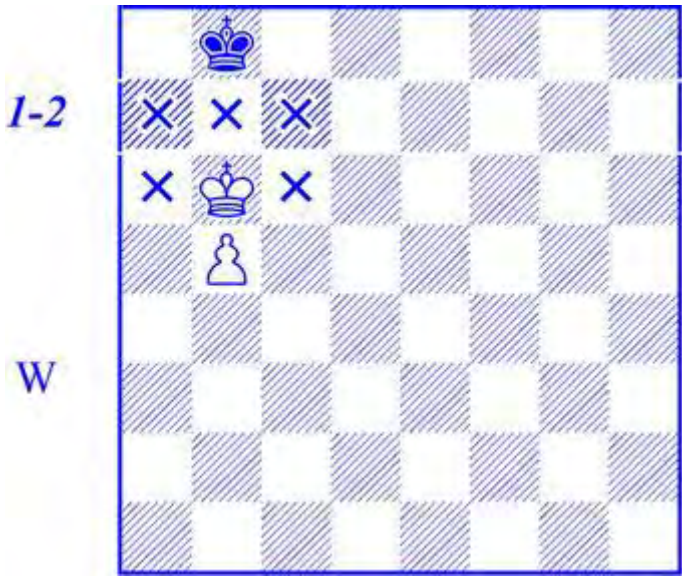
Key Squares are what we call those squares whose occupation by the king assures victory, regardless of whose turn it is to move. In other types of endgames, we may also speak of key squares for other pieces besides the king.

1-1



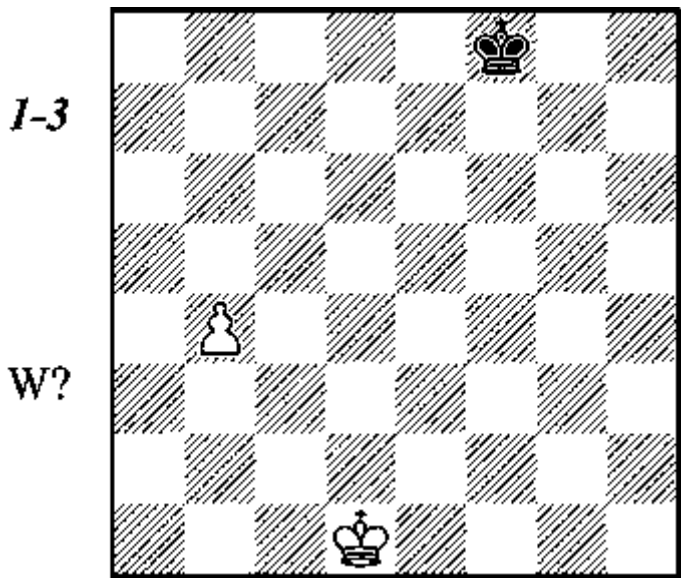
The d5-square on which the king now stands is not a key square – White to move does not win. The key squares are c6, d6 and e6. Black to move must retreat the king, allowing the enemy king onto one of the key squares. With White to move, the position is drawn, since he cannot move to any key square.

With the pawn on the fifth rank (see the next diagram), the key squares are not only a7, b7 and c7, but also the similar sixth-rank squares a6, b6, and c6. White wins, even if he is on move.



1 Ka6! Ka8 2 b6 Kb8 3 b7+–

Note that 1 Kc6?! is inaccurate in view of 1…Ka7!, when White has to return to the starting position with 2 Kc7 (2 b6+? Ka8!⊙=) 2…Ka8 3 Kb6 (again, 3 b6?? is stalemate) 3…Kb8 4 Ka6!, etc.



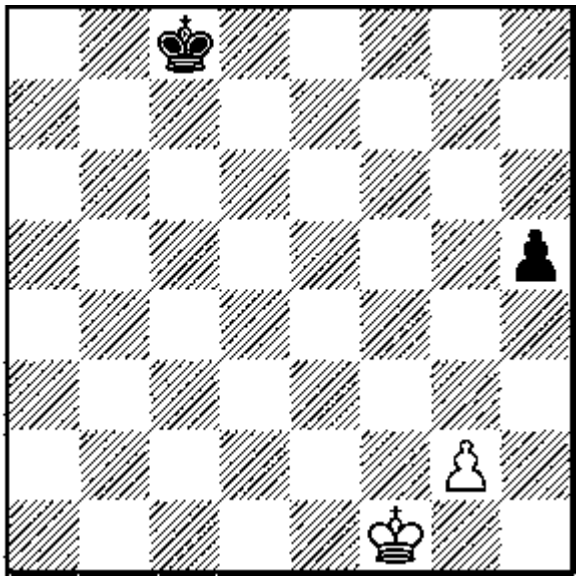
The key squares are a6, b6 and c6. The sensible thing here is to head for the square farthest from the enemy king, since that will be the one hardest to defend.

1 Kc2! Ke7 2 Kb3 Kd6 3 Ka4 (3 Kc4? Kc6=) **3…Kc6 4 Ka5** (△ 5 Ka6) **4…Kb7 5 Kb5**⊙ +–.

J. Moravec, 1952

1-4

W?



1 Kf2!

On 1 Kg1? Kd7, Black's king successfully defends the pawn, whereas now, it is too late: 1…Kd7 2 Kg3 Ke6 3 Kh4+–.

1…h4! 2 Kg1!!

The natural 2 Kf3? is refuted by 2…h3! If the pawn is taken, Black's king heads for h8. And if 3 g4, White cannot gain control of the key squares on the sixth rank: 3…Kd7 4 Kg3 Ke6 5 K×h3 Kf6 6 Kh4 Kg6.

2…h3 3 g3!

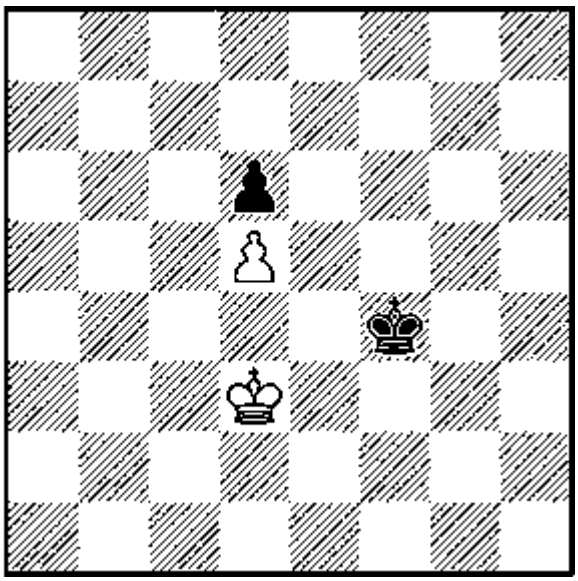
The key squares for a pawn on g3 are on the fifth rank – closer to White's king.

3…Kd7 4 Kh2 Ke6 5 K×h3 Kf5 6 Kh4 Kg6 7 Kg4⊙+–.

Tragicomedies

Coull – Stanciu
Saloniki ol 1988

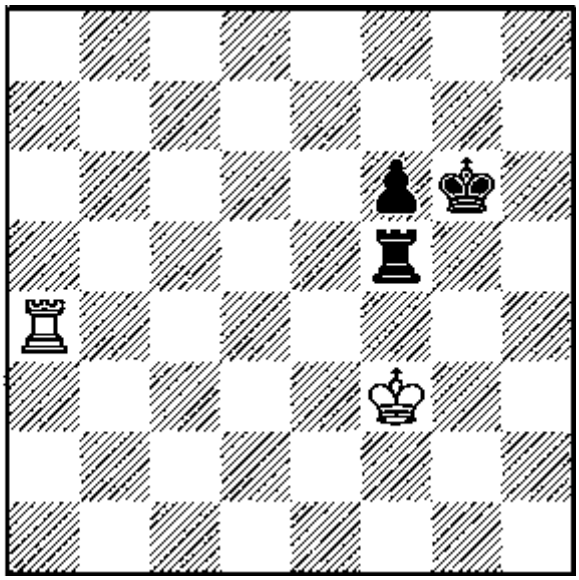
1-5



The lady playing White, Scotland's Board One, saw that she must lose the d5-pawn, and therefore resigned. What can I say, except: No comment needed!

Spielmann – Duras
Karlsbad 1907

1-6



W

1 Rf4?? Kg5! White resigned.

Corresponding Squares

Corresponding squares are squares of reciprocal zugzwang. We may speak of corresponding squares for kings, for kings with pawns, and with other material, we may speak of correspondence between any pairs of pieces.

The most commonly seen cases of corresponding squares are: ***the opposition, mined squares,*** *and* ***triangulation.***

Opposition

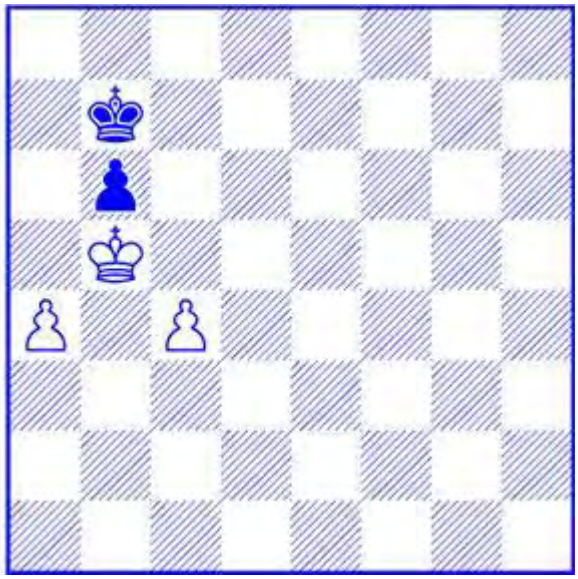
Opposition is the state of two kings standing on the same file with one square separating them ("close" opposition, three or five squares between them, is called "distant" opposition); the opposition may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal.

"To get the opposition" means to achieve this standing of the kings one square apart with the opponent to move (that is, to place him in zugzwang); "to fall into opposition" means, conversely, to fall into zugzwang oneself.

Return to Diagram 1-1, where we see the simplest case of the opposition (close, vertical). With White to move, there is no win: 1 Kc5 Kc7⊙; or 1 Ke5 Ke7⊙. Black to move loses, because he must allow the enemy king onto one of the key squares: 1…Kc7 2 Ke6; or 1…Ke7 2 Kc6.

When we are speaking of the opposition, it is usually not just one pair of squares, but several, which are under consideration: c5 and c7, d5 and d7, e5 and e7. ***The stronger side gets the opposition in order to execute an outflanking*** (where the enemy king retreats to one side, and our king then attacks the other way). ***The weaker side gets the opposition in order to prevent this outflanking.***

1-7



B

White has the opposition, but it is not enough to win.

1…Kc7!

1…Ka7? is a mistake, in view of 2 a5! ba 3 K×a5 (here, getting the opposition decides) 3…Kb7 4 Kb5 Kc7 5 Kc5⊙+–.

2 Ka6

Since 2 c5 would be useless, the king starts an outflanking maneuver. Black replies by getting the horizontal opposition.

2…Kc6 3 Ka7 Kc7! 4 Ka8 Kc8!= (but not 4…Kc6? 5 Kb8 Kc5 6 Kb7+–).

If we moved the position one file to the right, White would win: 1…Kd7 is met by 2 d5!.

White would also win if he had a reserve tempo at his disposal. Let's move the a-pawn back to a3 – then, after 1…Kc7 2 Ka6 Kc6, he first recaptures the opposition by 3 a4!, and then performs the outflanking maneuver, 3…Kc7 4 Ka7 Kc6 5 Kb8! (outflanking!) 5…Kc5 6 Kb7+–.

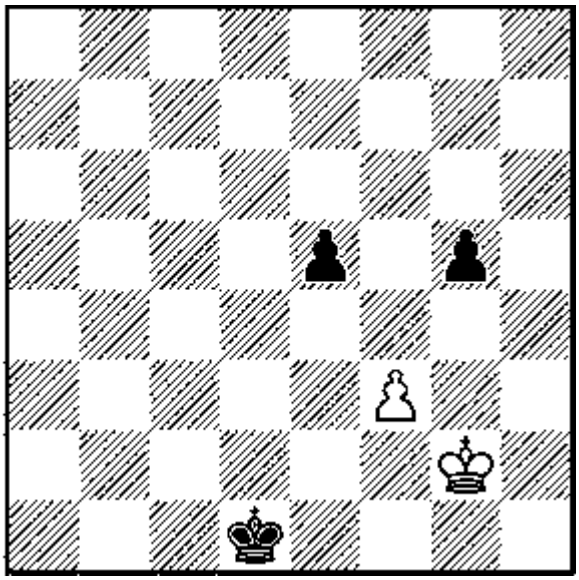
In the next diagram, White's king cannot move forward: on 1 Kg3? there comes 1…Ke1! 2 Kg2 Ke2 3 Kg3 Kf1!–+.

White would like to take the opposition with 1 Kf1, but this is also a mistake. After 1…Kd2 2 Kf2 Kd3, the f3-square his king needs is occupied by his own pawn, and the opposition passes to his opponent: 3 Kf1(or g3) Ke3! 4 Kg2 Ke2, etc.

H. Neustadtl, 1890

1-8

W?



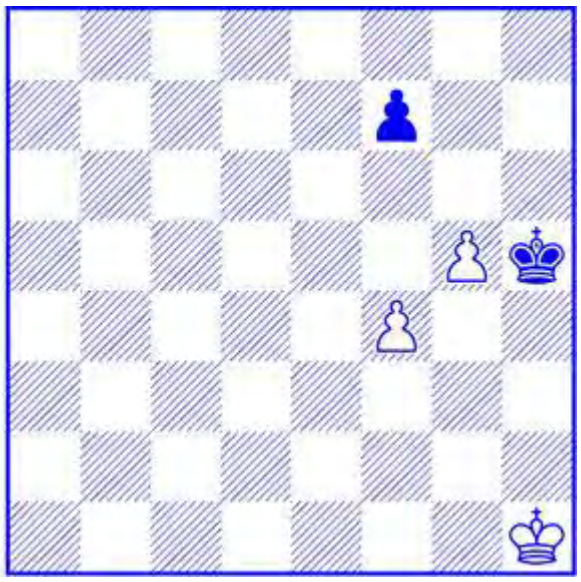
The only thing that saves White is getting the distant opposition:

1 Kh1!! Kd2 (1…Ke1 2 Kg1=; 1…g4 2 Kg2! Kd2 3 fg=) **2 Kh2 Kd3 3 Kh3**=.

Now let's examine ***the mechanism by which the stronger side can exploit the distant opposition.*** It is, in fact, quite simple, and ***consists of the conversion of the distant opposition into close opposition by means of outflanking. If outflanking is not possible, then possession of the distant opposition is worthless.***

H. Mattison, 1918*

1-9



W?

The pawns are lost, after which Black's king will control the key squares in front of the f7-pawn. But White has a tactical resource at hand: he moves both pawns forward to lure Black's pawn nearer to his king allowing him to defend the new key squares.

1 g6! fg 2 f5!

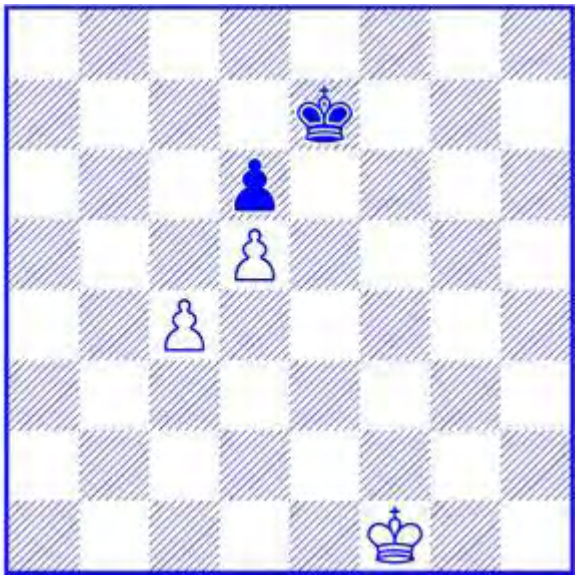
2 Kg2? Kg4 3 f5 gf –+, and Black controls the opposition; also bad is 2 Kh2? Kg4 3 f5 K×f5! 4 Kg3 Kg5–+.

2…gf 3 Kg1

Black controls the distant opposition, but he cannot convert it into the close opposition. The problem is that after **2…Kg5 3 Kf1**, outflanking with 3…Kh4 has no point; and on 3…Kf4 (g4), it is White who takes the close opposition by 4 Kf2 (g2), and Black's king cannot use the f5-square as it is blocked by its own pawn. If the king and the pawn could both occupy this square simultaneously, then on the next move the outflanking would be decisive; unfortunately, the rules of chess do not allow such a thing.

J. Drtina, 1907

1-10



W?

Taking the distant opposition with 1 Ke1? leads only to a draw. The opposition on the e-file is

meaningless: 1…Ke8! 2 Ke2 Ke7 3 Ke3 Ke8 4 Ke4 Ke7, and White cannot get any closer, because the e5-square is off limits. And if the white king leaves the e-file, his opponent will take the opposition forever, e.g., 2 Kf2 Kf8! 3 Kg3 Kg7! 4 Kf3 Kf7!, etc.

In such situations there is usually a "major" line, in which is it vitally important to capture the opposition. And when the enemy king retreats from it, you must outflank it. In this instance, that would be the f-file.

Imagine that Black's king was on f7, and moved to one side. White must move to outflank, thus: **1 Kg2!**

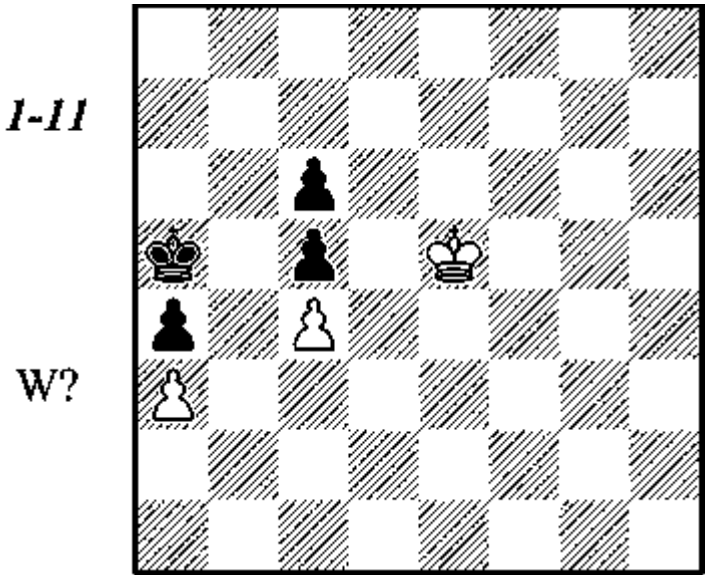
It is pointless to stay on the e-file: White's king will reach the key square g6. So Black plays **1…Kf6**

As we have already noted, on the f-file it is necessary to maintain the opposition; therefore, **2 Kf2!**

What's Black to do now? Moving the king forward is useless: 2…Kf5 3 Kf3 Ke5 4 Ke3 Kf5 5 Kd4 and 6 c5. If we retreat the king to the right, White's king advances left and takes over the key squares on the queenside: 2…Kg6 3 Ke3 Kf7 4 Kd4 (4 Kf3 is not bad, either) 4…Ke7 5 Kc3 Kd7 6 Kb4 Kc7 7 Ka5! (diagonal opposition!) 7…Kb7 8 Kb5⊙ Kc7 9 Ka6+–.

That leaves only **2…Ke7**; but then comes the algorithm we already know: **3 Kg3! Kf7 4 Kf3! Ke7 5 Kg4 Kf8 6 Kf4! Ke7 7 Kg5! Kf7 8 Kf5+–.** The distant opposition has been successfully transformed into the close one.

F. Sackmann, 1913



The first thing White must do is seize the opposition.

1 Kf5! Kb6

Black's king must be the first one on the sixth rank. If it had been on a7 in the starting position, then 1…Kb7! would lead to a draw, since White could no longer seize the opposition: 2 Ke6 Ka6!=; or 2 Kf6 Kb6!=.

2 Kf6!

The rest is the standard technique of converting the distant opposition into the close opposition. Here, the "major line" is the seventh rank.

2…Kb7 3 Kf7! (3 Ke5? Ka7!=) **3…Kb6** (3…Kb8 4 Ke6!) **4 Ke8!** (outflanking!) **4…Ka7 5 Ke7! Ka8 6 Kd6! Kb7 7 Kd7! Kb6 8 Kc8**+– (the final, decisive outflanking).

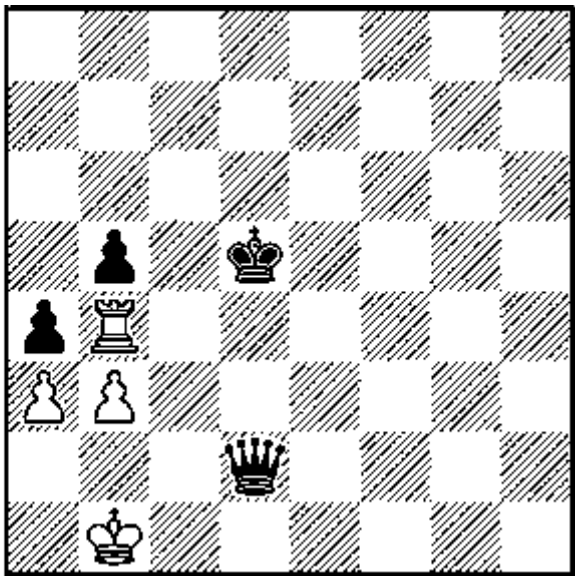
Instead of the easily winning 7 Kd7!, White might also play 7 K×c5?! Kc7 8 Kb4 Kb6 9 c5+! (9 K×a4? c5 10 Kb3 Ka5 11 Kc3 Ka4 12 Kb2 Ka5 13 Kb3 Kb6 14 Kc3 Ka5=) 9…Ka6 10 K×a4.

George Walker analyzed a similar position as far back as 1841. We shall return to it in our next section – mined squares.

Tragicomedies

Yates – Tartakower
Bad Homburg 1927

1-12



B

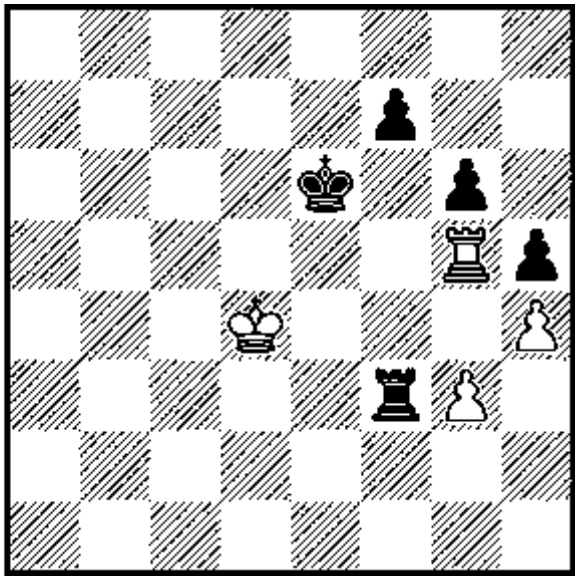
Black has a won position. 1…ab is possible; 1…Qc3!? 2 R×b5+ (2 Ka2 Qc2+; 2 ba Q×a3) 2…Kc6 3 ba Q×a3 is also strong. Tartakower, however, decided to transpose into a pawn ending, which he thought was won.

1…Q×b4?? 2 ab ab 3 Kb2 Kc4 4 Ka3! b2 (4…Kc3 is stalemate) **5 Ka2!**

Black had missed this move when he traded off his queen. He had hoped to win the b4-pawn and seize the opposition, but miscalculated. After 5…Kc3 6 Kb1 K×b4 7 K×b2, the draw is obvious.

Yusupov – Ljubojevic
Linares 1992

1-13



B?

White's rook is tied to the defense of the pawn at g3. Black would have won easily if he had transferred his rook by 1…Ra3! (to prevent the white king from approaching the pawns: 2 Ke4 f5+! and 3…Kf6 wins), followed by …Kf6-g7 and …f7-f6 (or …f7-f5).

Instead, Black played **1…Rf5?? 2 Ke4! R×g5 3 hg**

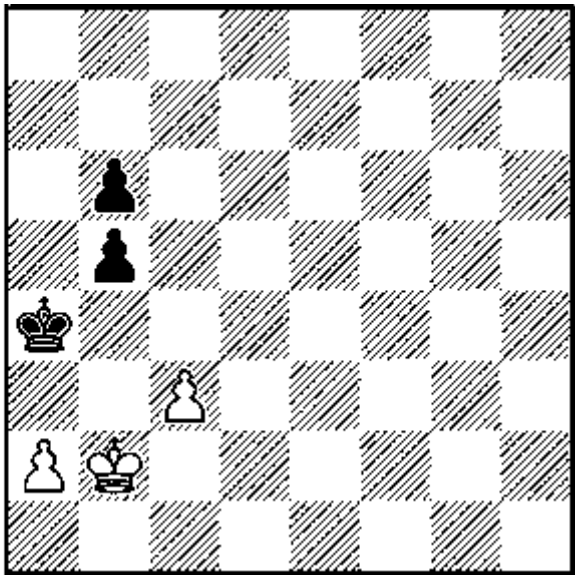
White has the opposition, but Ljubojevic had counted on **3…f6 4 gf K×f6 5 Kf4 g5+**

Yusupov replied **6 Kf3!**, and it became clear that the opposition on the f-file would give Black nothing, since 6…Kf5 is met by 7 g4+! hg+ 8 Kg3=. And as soon as Black's king goes to the e-file, White's king immediately takes the opposition.

6…Kf7 7 Kf2! Ke6 8 Ke2! Kd6 9 Kd2 Kc5 10 Ke3! Draw.

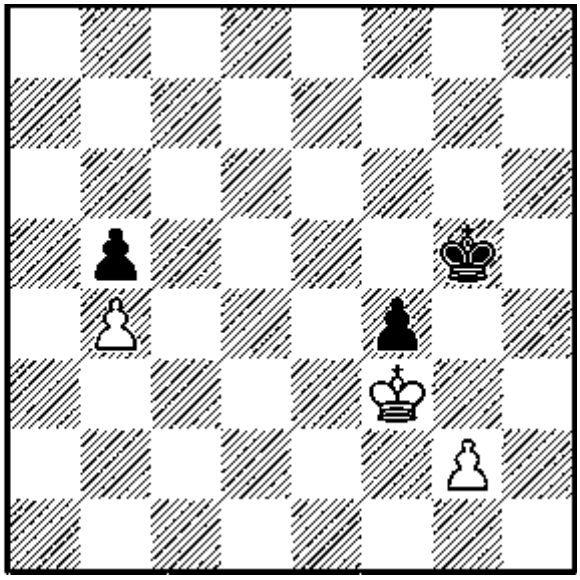
Exercises

1-14



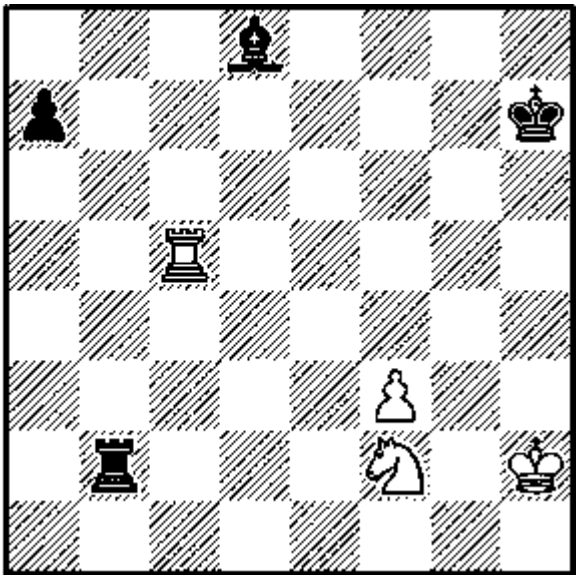
1/1
B?

1-15



1/2
W?

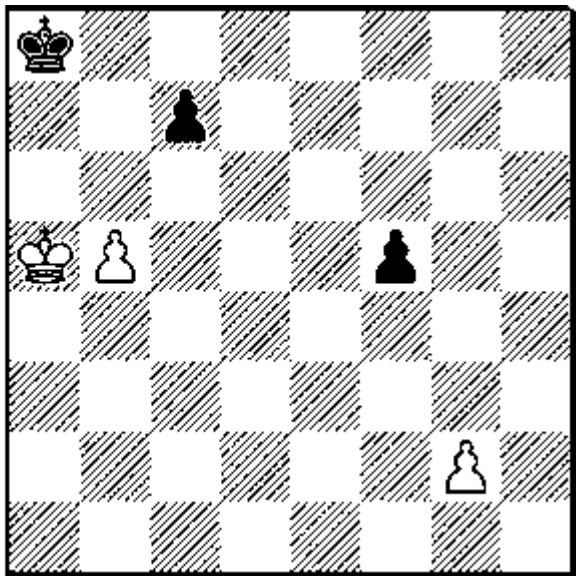
1-16



1/3
W?

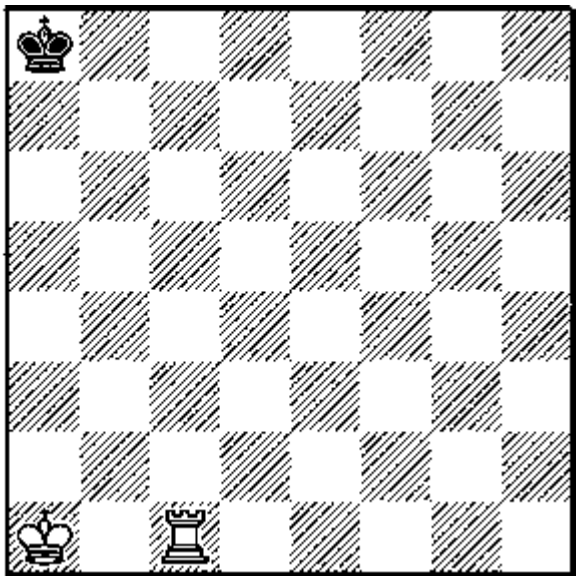
1-17

1/4
W?/Play



1-18

1/5
W?



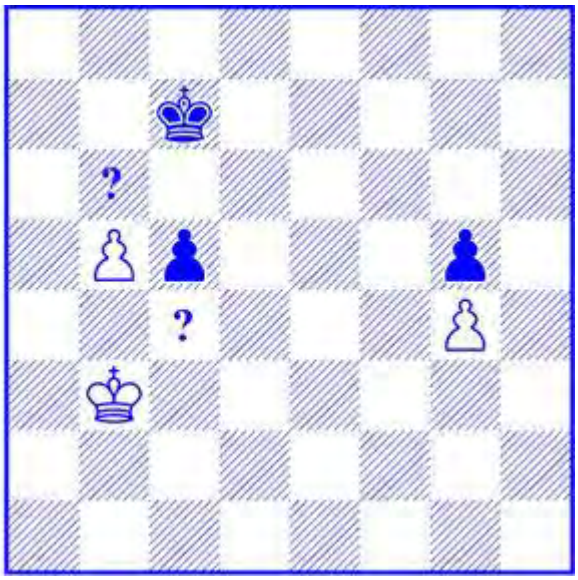
Mate Black with just one [mating] move by the rook.

Mined Squares

Sometimes, it is a single pair of squares that correspond; I refer to such squares as being “mined.” Do not be the first to step on a mined square, or you’ll be “blown up” – that is, fall into zugzwang. You must either first allow your opponent to step on the mined square, or move forward, accurately avoiding it.

Here are two quite typical examples of mined squares.

1-19



Here we have what I call "***untouchable pawns.***" White's king shuttles between b3, c3 and d3, while the black king goes from c7 to b7 to a7, neither of them able to attack the pawn – the squares c4 and b6 are mined.

1-20

Here, kings at e6 and c5 result in reciprocal zugzwang. White wins by forcing his opponent to go to the mined square first.

1 Kf6! Kb5

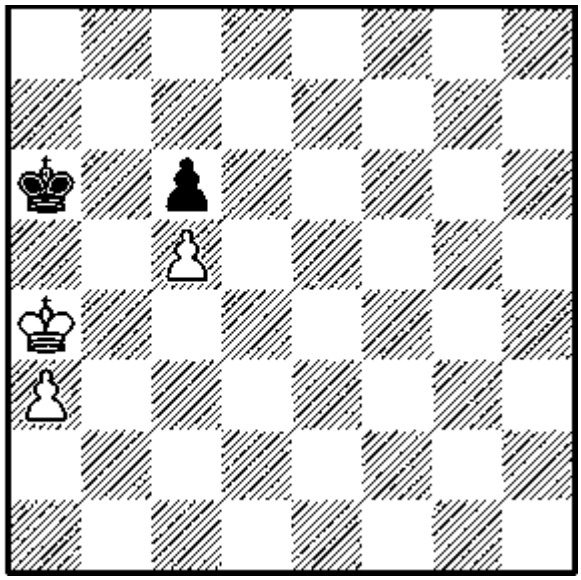
Passive defense is hopeless too: 1…Kc7 2 Ke7 Kc8 3 K×d6 – the king captures the d6-pawn while simultaneously controlling the key square for the d5-pawn.

2 Ke7! Kc5 3 Ke6!⊙+–

Black to move plays 1…Kb5! White, however, is better off than his opponent in that the loss of a pawn does not mean the loss of the game: he replies 2 Ke4 (but not 2 Kf6? Kc4! 3 Ke6 Kc5–+) 2…Kc4 3 Ke3 K×d5 4 Kd3, with a draw.

And now, let's return to a position we reached while analyzing F. Sackmann's study (Diagram 1-11).

1-21
$
B



The only winning try is to get the king to the d6-square. To keep the opponent from counterattacking successfully on the queenside, it is important to begin the march with the black king as far away as possible. This consideration shows us the first pair of corresponding squares: a6 and b4.

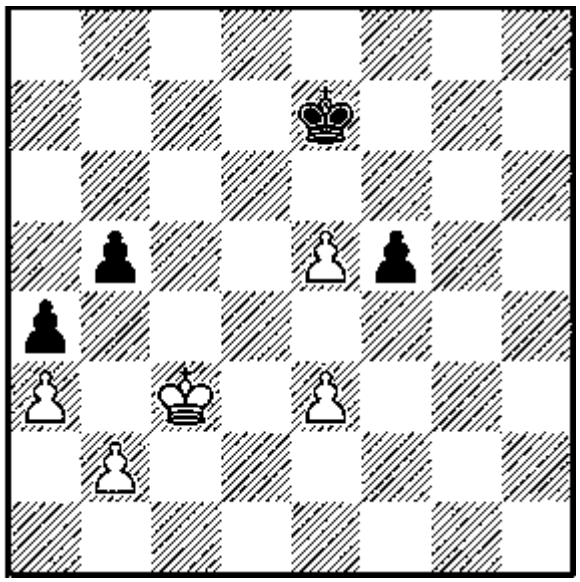
1…Kb7 2 Kb3! Ka6 3 Kb4!⊙ Kb7

Now it is time to consider further action. Note the reciprocal zugzwang with the kings at d4 and b5; that means the d4-square is mined, and must be circumvented.

4 Kc4 Ka6 5 Kd3!! Ka5 6 Ke4 Kb5 7 Kd4 (and Black is in zugzwang) **7…Ka4 8 Ke5 K×a3 9 Kd6+–.**

Alekhine – Yates
Hamburg 1910

1-22
W?



A mistake would be 1 Kd4? Ke6⊙; thus, the d4- and e6-squares are mined. And 1 Kb4? Ke6 2 K×b5 K×e5 3 K×a4 Ke4 4 b4 K×e3 leads to a queen-and-rook-pawn vs. queen endgame, which is, according to theory, drawn.

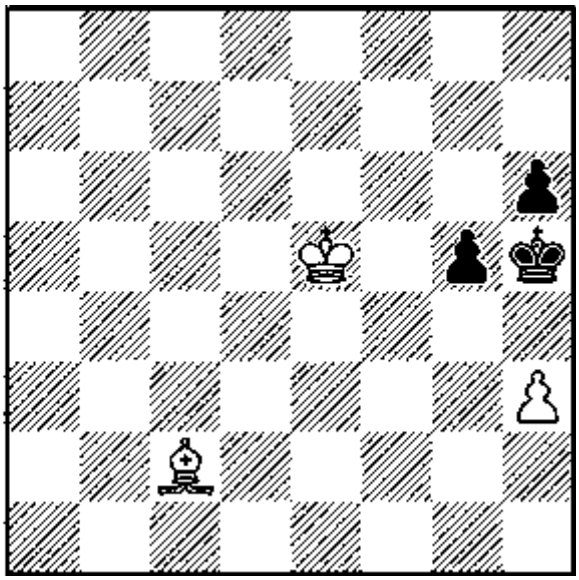
1 Kd3 Kd7 (1…Ke6? 2 Kd4+–) **2 e4! f4 3 Ke2 Ke6 4 Kf2!!**, and Black resigned. With a white pawn at e4 and a black one at f4, we already know the squares f3 and e5 are mined. White's king avoided entering the f3-square first, while his opposite number had no similar waiting move, since the e5-pawn was in the way.

Incidentally, White's moves could also have been transposed: 1 e4 f4 2 Kd3 Ke6 3 Ke2!⊙ (3 Kd4?! Ke7).

Tragicomedies

Kobese – Tu Hoang Thai
Yerevan ol 1996

1-23



W

The position is drawn. White sets a last trap, which unexpectedly succeeds.

1 Bd1+!? Kh4??

1… Kg6! was necessary, △ 2…h5 and 3…g4=.

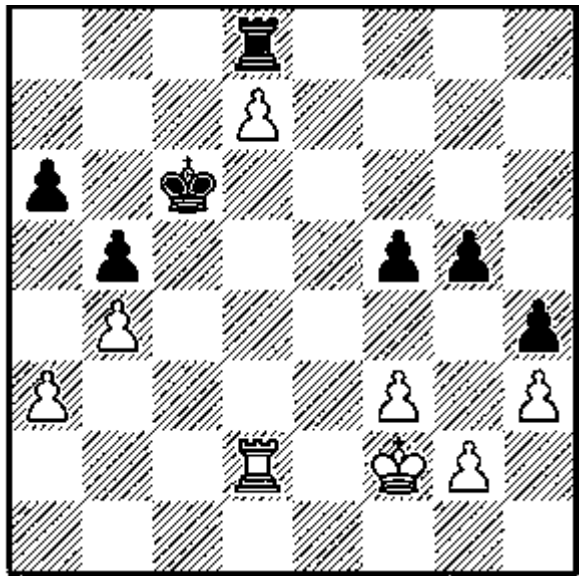
2 Bg4 h5 3 Kf5! hg 4 hg⊙ and Black resigned.

It is worth noting that 1 Bf5!? must be met not with 1…Kh4?? 2 Bg4+–, but with 1…g4! 2 B×g4+ (2 hg+ Kg5 △ 3…h5=) 2… Kg6, with a draw (doubters are referred to the beginning of Chapter 4).

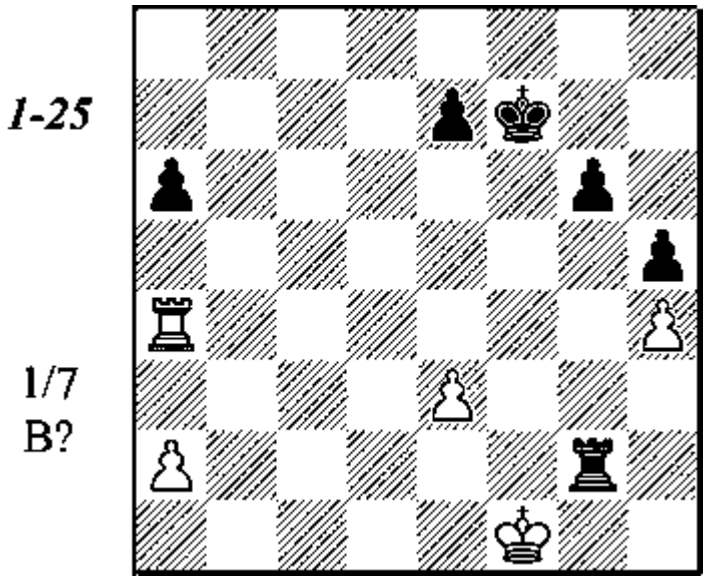
Exercises

The next pair of exercises are rather difficult. In each, you must judge whether Black ought to go into the pawn endgame.

1-24

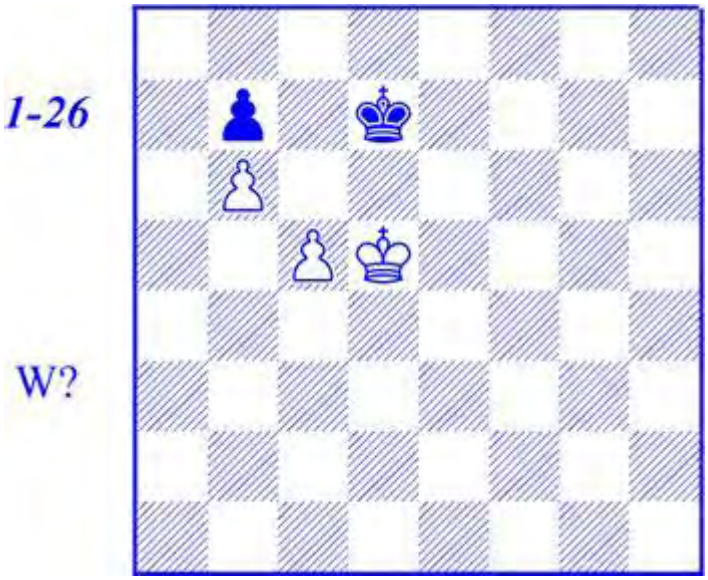


1/6
B?



Triangulation

Triangulation refers to a king maneuver which aims to lose a tempo, and leave the opponent with the move.



The d5- and d7-squares are in correspondence. The mobility of Black's king is restricted: he must watch for the c5-c6 break, and also avoid being pressed to the edge of the board. It is not surprising, therefore, that White can easily "lose" a tempo and place his opponent in zugzwang.

1 Ke5!

1 c6+? is mistaken here, in view of 1…Kc8! (but not 1…bc+? 2 Kc5 Kd8 3 Kd6! Kc8 4 K×c6 Kb8 5 b7+–) 2 Kd6 Kb8! 3 Kd7 bc=.

1…Kc6 (1…Ke7 2 c6) **2 Kd4 Kd7 3 Kd5**

White has achieved his aim, by describing a triangle with his king. The rest is simple.

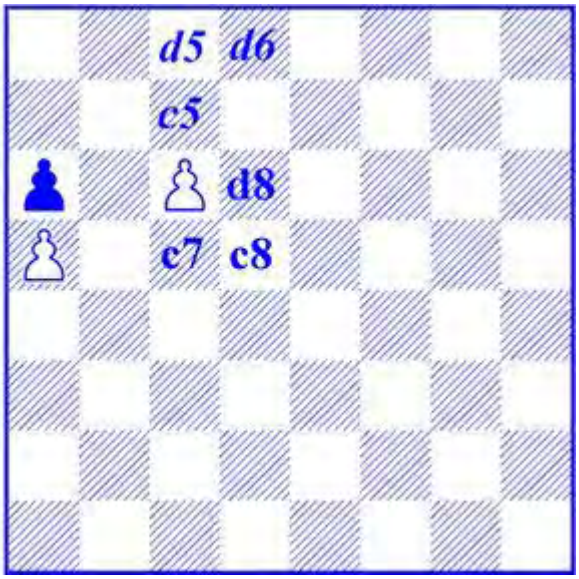
3…Kc8 4 Ke6! (diagonal opposition) **4…Kd8 5 Kd6** (and now, vertical) **5…Kc8 6 Ke7 Kb8 7 Kd7 Ka8 8 c6**+–.

The following position is very important, both for itself and as an illustration of the characteristic logic of analyzing corresponding squares.

Fahrni – Alapin

1912

1-27



The kings were on d5 and c8 here; but we shall not place them on the board just yet – let's deal with the squares of correspondence first.

Two pairs of squares of reciprocal zugzwang are obvious right off: d6-d8, and c5-c7. The squares d6 and c5 border on d5; and for Black, the corresponding squares d8 and c7 border on c8. Thus, a standard means of identifying a new correspondence: that of the d5- and c8-squares.

Along with d5 and c5, White has two equally important squares: c4 and d4; while Black has, adjoining the corresponding squares c7 and c8, only one square: d8 (or b8). With Black's king on d8, White makes a waiting move with his king, from c4 to d4 (or the reverse). Black's king will be forced onto c7 or c8, when White occupies the corresponding square and wins.

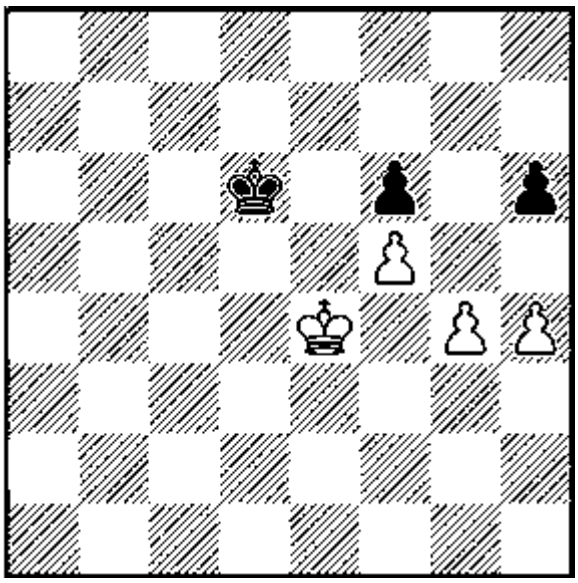
1 Kc4(d4)! Kd8 2 Kd4(c4)!⊙ Kc8 3 Kd5! Kd8 (3…Kc7 4 Kc5⊙ and 5 Kb6) **4 Kd6 Kc8 5 c7⊙**

.

H. Neustadtl, 1898

1-28

W?



Find two winning plans

The author's solution to this study involves the opposition, which White seizes with his very first move.

1 Kd4 Kc6 2 Kc4 (2 g5? fg!= does not work) **2…Kd6 3 Kb5!**

The opposition can only win if it leads to an outflanking. Here the outflanking looks risky, but it turns out to be playable because of the line 3…Ke5 4 Kc6 Kf4 (4…h5 5 gh K×f5 6 Kd5⊙) 5 Kd6 K×g4 6 Ke6+–.

3…Kd5! 4 Kb6!

White takes the opposition again, thanks to his reserve tempo, h4-h5. But first, the enemy king must be decoyed to a bad position – as far as possible from the g4-pawn.

4…Kd6 5 Kb7 Kd7 6 h5! Kd6 7 Kc8 (another outflanking) **7…Ke5 8 Kd7 Kf4 9 Ke6+–**.

In 1968, during a session of training in the calculation of variations (I find pawn endings quite useful for this), I discovered a second solution to this study, based on completely different logic.

The d5-square is key here (with White's king at d5, and Black's at d7, White wins by h4-h5). By the way, with the pawn already on h5, occupying the d5-square is no longer decisive: the key squares are now on the sixth rank – c6, d6 and e6. Which leads us to an important conclusion: ***when the pawn structure changes, the system of key squares associated with the position generally changes too, just as with the system of corresponding squares.***

With White's king at f4, Black must deal with the threat of g4-g5. It can be parried by putting the black king at e7 (but not f7, since then White will occupy the key square d5) – which immediately gives us two pairs of corresponding squares: f4-e7 and e4-d6. Next to these, White has two equivalent squares: f3 and e3. Black, meanwhile, has only one – d7. Thus, the winning mechanism becomes clear – triangulation!

1 Kf4

1 Kf3 – but not 1 Ke3? Ke5! 2 Kf3 h5 3 Kg3 Ke4⊙.

1…Ke7 2 Kf3 Kd7 3 Ke3! Kd6

3…Ke7 4 Kf4! Kf7 5 Ke4 Ke7 6 Kd5 Kd7 7 h5+–.

4 Ke4!⊙ Kc6 5 Kf4 Kd6 6 g5+–.

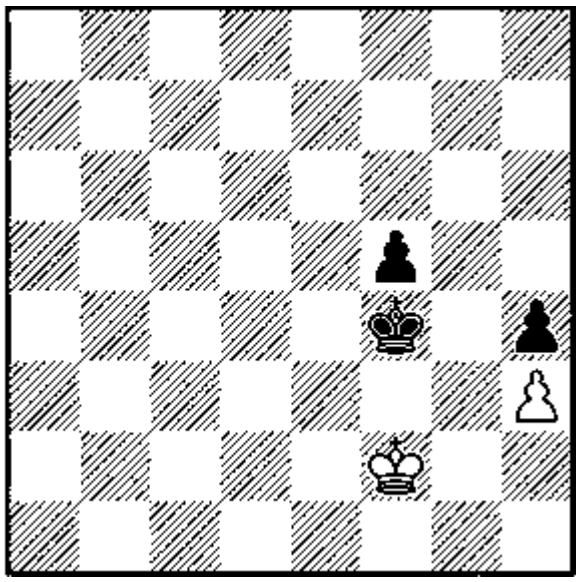
Tragicomedies

Yudasin – Osnos

Leningrad 1987

1-29

B

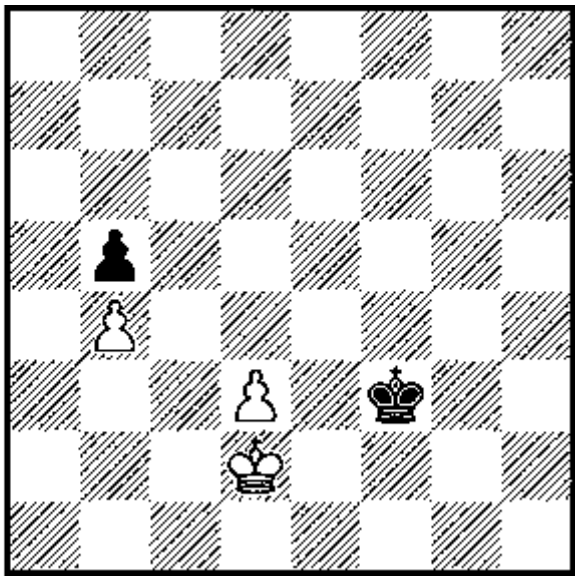


With his last move (1 Ke2-f2), Yudasin offered a draw, adding that this position was a well-known draw, which one might find in any book. His opponent, an international master and an experienced trainer (he trained Viktor Korchnoi for many years) believed him, and accepted his offer!

After 1…Ke4 2 Ke2 f4 3 Kf2 f3, we reach a position which is, indeed, in all endgame books (Fahrni-Alapin), but it is a win. Black wins by triangulation: 4 Kf1 Kf5 5 Ke1 Ke5⊙ 6 Kf1 Ke4⊙.

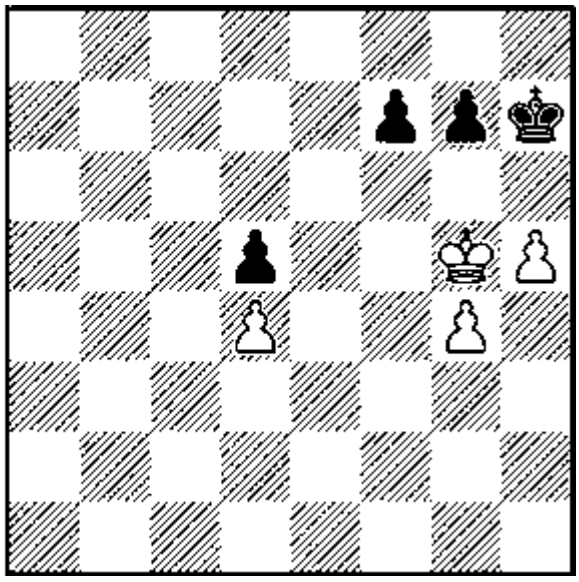
Exercises

1-30
$



1/8
W?

1-31



1/9
W?/Play

Other Cases of Correspondence

Situations with corresponding squares come in all shapes and sizes – from the most elementary to cases so complex that most of the unoccupied squares on the board turn out to be squares of reciprocal zugzwang.

How is the correspondence between squares determined? There is no special formula. The sensible way is to find key squares, examine the possible plans for both sides, and calculate the simplest variations. This preliminary analysis may uncover some reciprocal zugzwang situations; from there, you may go on to define an entire network of corresponding squares.

The following examples demonstrate how to make a logical analysis of a position.

N. Grigoriev, 1921

1-32

B?

Black is obliged to defend the key squares e2 and f2, which he can do either by 1…Ke3 or 1…Kf3. The first appears more natural (the opposition!); but let's not be too hasty about drawing a conclusion.

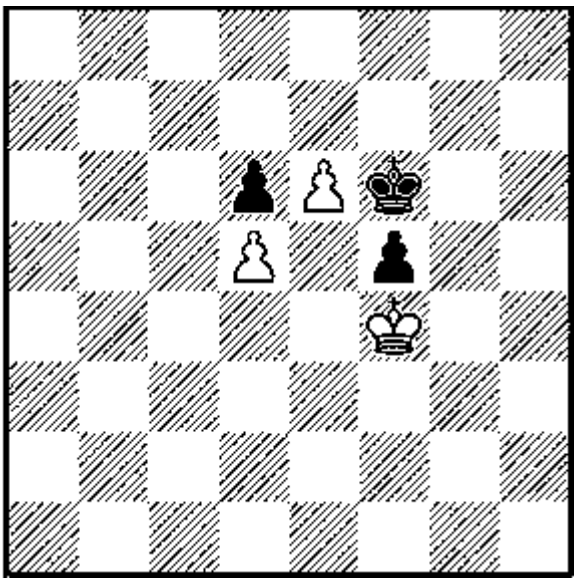
White's king will attempt to break through on the queenside, by occupying the key square b3 – this too must be prevented. With White's king at a2, Black's king is obliged to occupy the b4-square (a4 would be too far from the kingside). Immediately, we have the whole packet of corresponding squares: a2-b4, b1-c5, c1-d4, d1-e3 and e1-f3. As it turns out, the routine 1… Ke3? loses – after 2 Kd1, Black would be in zugzwang. But **1…Kf3! 2 Kd1 Ke3** draws easily.

I gave this example a blue diagram, not because it was especially important, but in order to underscore that a system of corresponding squares certainly does not have to always be "straight-line," as with the opposition. Each case demands concrete analysis. You may only take the opposition after having ensured that this will place your opponent in zugzwang, not yourself.

And if, as in the present example, you must instead cede the opposition to your opponent, I call such cases of corresponding squares the ***"anti-opposition."*** This term seems more exact than the term "knight's-move opposition" I have seen used (after all, the entire idea of "opposition" is for the kings to be standing on the same line, not on adjoining lines).

N. Grigoriev, 1922

1-33



W?

The correspondence of the squares f4 and f6 is obvious (on 1…Kg6, 2 e7 Kf7 3 K×f5 K×e7 4 Kg6 decides). And when White's king appears on h4, Black must be on the g6-square (but not f6, because of Kh5). The adjoining-squares principle permits us to define yet a third pair of corresponding squares, g3-g7.

Let's go further. The square f3 adjoins both f4 and g3 – its obvious correspondent is g6. From h3, the king wants to go to g3 and h4 – thus, the corresponding square for Black is f6.

Let's pull back one rank, and look at the g2-square. From here, the king can go to f3 (the corresponding square: g6), g3 (g7), or h3 (f6). The only equivalent square for Black is f7 – but he cannot go there.

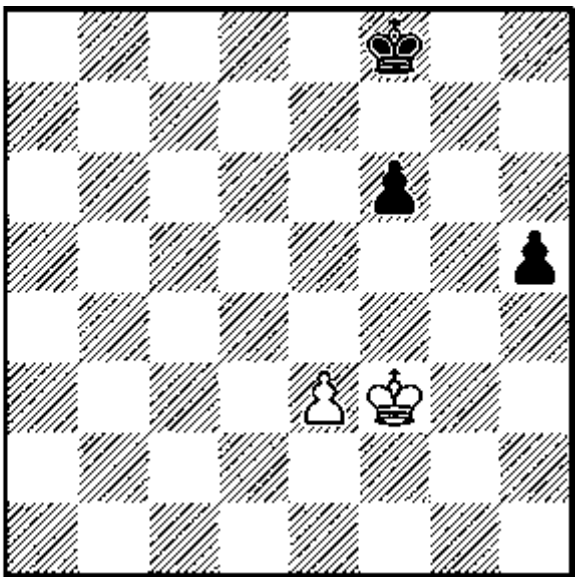
Thus, the solution becomes clear. The g2-square is the key: White must simply retreat his king there, see where Black's king goes in response, and go to the corresponding square.

1 Kf3 Kg6! 2 Kg2! Kf6 (2…Kg7 3 Kg3) **3 Kh3! Kg7 4 Kg3! Kf6** (4…Kg6 5 Kh4 Kf6 6 Kh5) **5 Kf4 Kg6 6 e7 Kf7 7 K×f5 K×e7 8 Kg6+–**.

Gulko – Short
Riga 1995

I-34

W?



First, we must make sure that the direct attempt to force a draw by trading off the e-pawn does not work.

1 Kf4? Ke7! (it will become clear later why the king goes to this square, and not to f7) 2 Kf5 Kf7 3 e4 (3 Kf4 Ke6 4 Ke4 h4 5 Kf4 Kd5!–+) 3…h4! 4 Kg4 Ke6 5 K×h4 Ke5–+.

It is also worth noting that if it were White's move in the position after 3 e4, he would still lose after 4 e5 h4! 5 Kg4 fe 6 K×h4 Ke6 7 Kg3 Kd5 8 Kf3 Kd4. The move e4-e5 only saves the game with Black's king at g7 or e7 (since the threat is to take on f6 with check).

Now, what can White do against the black king's march to the center? The only possibility is to attack the h5-pawn. He can draw, if he can meet Ke6 with Kh4 (with the pawn still on e3).

But if Black's king goes to g6, then keeping the king at h4 becomes pointless – here, White must go to f4, with the idea of pushing the e-pawn.

Note that these paired squares we have found are not corresponding squares, since no zugzwangs exist; but our calculations now allow us to begin the search and analysis of correspondences.

From f7, Black's king is ready to move in two directions – to e6 or to g6. White's king must keep the same possibilities in hand. This clarifies the first, and most important pair of corresponding squares: f7-g3. (And here is why 1 Kf4? is to be met by 1…Ke7! – in order to meet 2 Kg3!? with 2…Kf7!, placing White in zugzwang).

We are almost ready to make our first move. 1 Kg3? Kf7!⊙ is bad; and on 1 Kf2? Ke7! decides – the threat of 2…Ke6 forces White's king to approach h4 through the mined square g3.

1 Kg2!! Kg8

On 1…Kg7, White saves himself by 2 Kf3! The black king can reach e6 only through f7. The white king will then be able to access g3 on its way to h4.

2 Kf2 (2 Kf3 leads to the same thing) **2…Kf8 3 Kg2! Ke7 4 Kh3! Kf7 5 Kg3! Kg6**

If 5…Ke6 6 Kh4=; and if 5…f5, either 6 e4=, or 6 Kf4 h4 7 e4 h3 8 Kg3 fe 9 K×h3 Ke6 10 Kg3

Kd5 11 Kf2 Kd4 12 Ke2=.

6 Kf4 Kh6

On 6…Kf7, the only reply is 7 Kg3! (7 Kf5? Ke7⊙), while on 6…Kg7, it is 7 Kf3! (7 e4? Kg6⊙, and 7 Kf5? Kf7 8 e4 h4–+ are two bad alternatives).

7 Kf5 Kh7

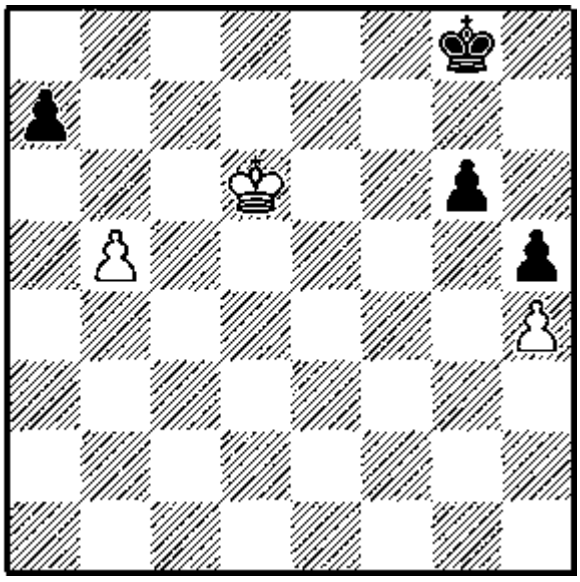
If 7…Kg7, then 8 Kf4! (but not 8 e4? Kf7 9 e5 h4–+) 8… Kg6 9 e4!⊙ Kh6 10 Kf5 Kg7 11 e5=.

8 e4 Kh6 (8…Kg7 9 e5) **9 K×f6 h4** Draw.

Note that the game position is not new – in 1979, C. Costantini composed it as a study. Of course, GM Gulko did not know this – but he was acquainted with the idea of corresponding squares and was able to put the method successfully into practice.

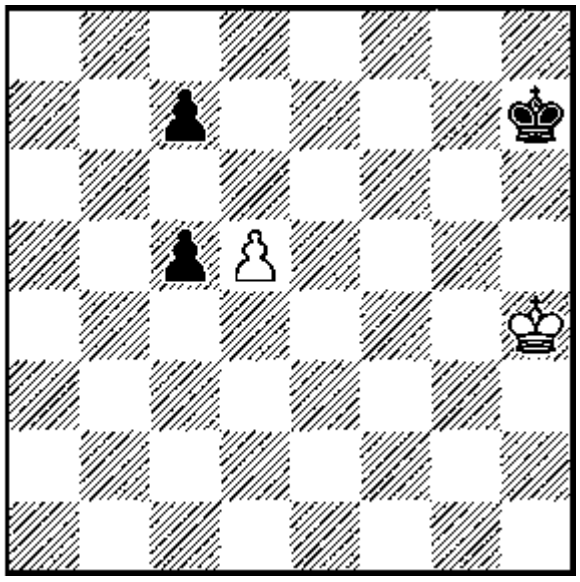
Exercises

1-35



1/10
W?

1-36

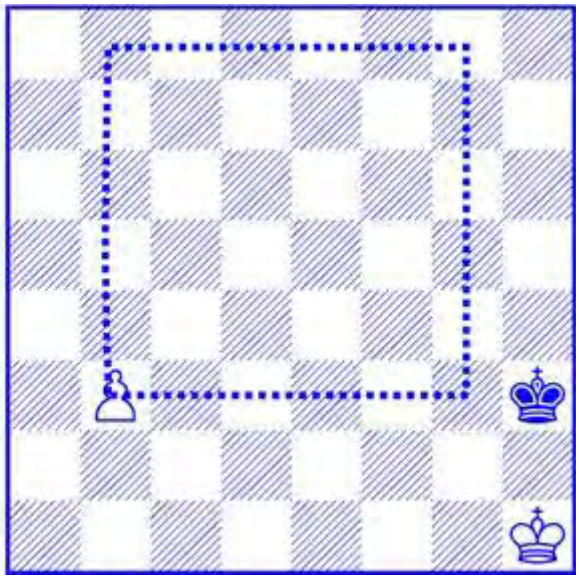


1/11
W?

King vs. Passed Pawns

The Rule of the Square

1-37



Imagine a square having for one of its sides the path from the pawn to its queening square. If the king stands within the square of the passed pawn, or can reach it on its move, the pawn can be stopped; otherwise, it will queen.

Black to move gets inside the square and draws (1…Kg4 or 1…Kg3). If it is White's move, then after 1 b4 the side of the new square becomes the f-file, which Black's king cannot reach in time.

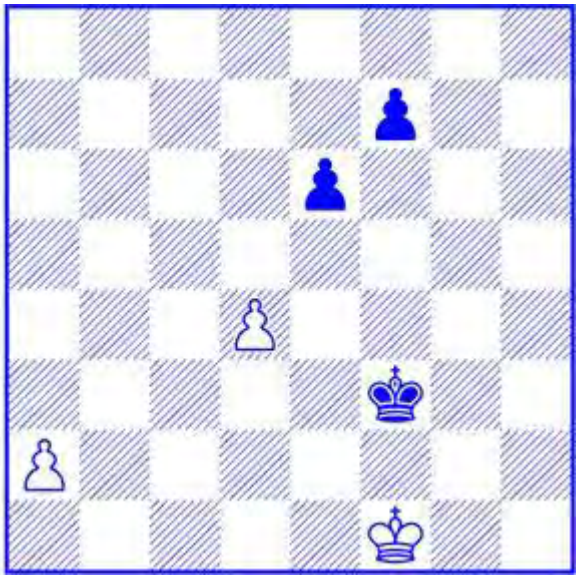
If the pawn stood on b2, then because the pawn can move two squares, the square should still be constructed from the b3-square.

Obstacles in the path of the king: It sometimes happens that even though the king is located within the square, it still cannot stop the passed pawn, because its own pawns get in the way.

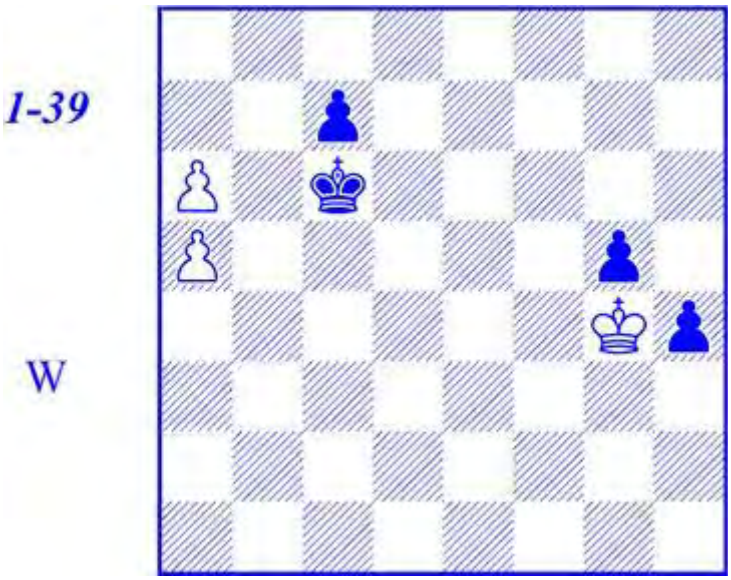
R. Bianchetti, 1925

1-38

W?



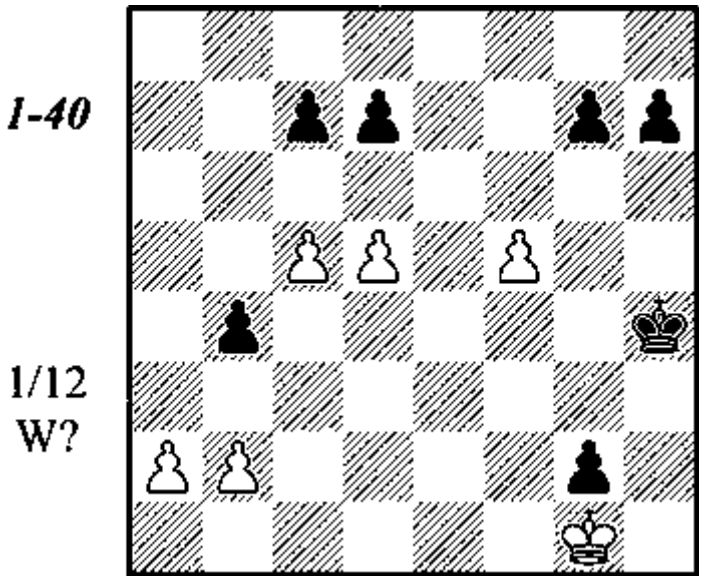
1 d5! ed 2 a4 Ke4 (2…d4 3 a5 d3 4 Ke1) **3 a5+–**, as Black cannot play 3…Kd5.



The waiting move **1 Kh3** places Black in zugzwang – now he loses. Without the pawn at c7, the opposite result occurs.

An analogous zugzwang occurs if you move the pawn at a5 to c5. The only difference is that this time, without the pawn at c7, the position would be drawn.

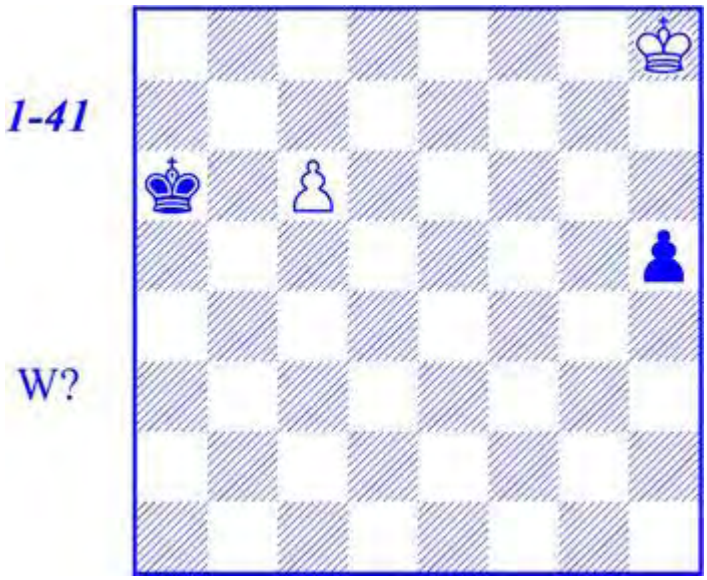
Exercises



Réti's Idea

It sometimes happens that a king outside the square of a passed pawn can still catch it. The win of the missing tempo (or even several tempi) is accomplished by the creation of accompanying threats, most often (though not exclusively) involved with supporting one's own passed pawn.

R. Réti, 1921



Black's king lies within the square of the c6-pawn, while White is short two tempi needed to catch the h5-pawn. Nevertheless, he can save himself – the trick is "***to chase two birds at once.***" The king's advance is dual-purpose: he chases after the h-pawn, while simultaneously approaching the queen's wing.

1 Kg7! h4 2 Kf6! Kb6

If 2…h3, then 3 Ke7(or e6), and the pawns queen together.

3 Ke5! K×c6

3…h3 4 Kd6 h2 5 c7=.

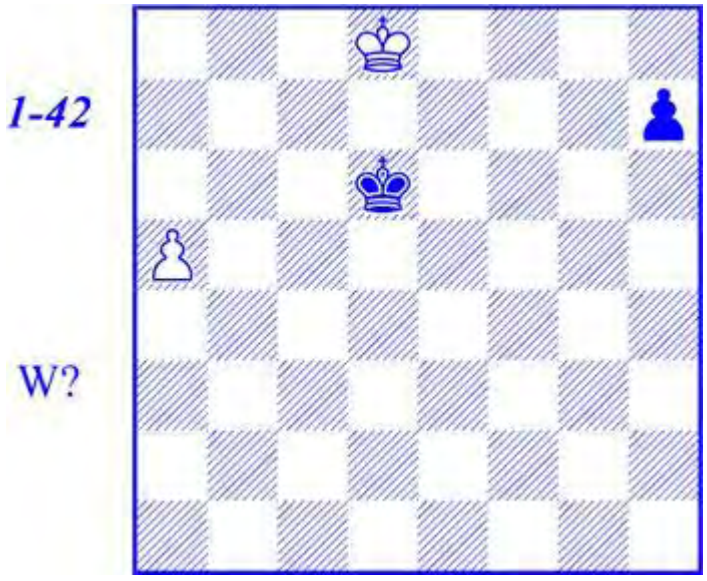
4 Kf4=

A miracle has come to pass: the king, even though two tempi behind, nevertheless has caught the pawn!

In 1928, Réti offered a different version of this study: move the white king to h5, and instead of the pawn at h5, put three (!) black pawns at f6, g7 and h6. The solution is similar: **1 Kg6!**, and after any Black reply (1…f5, 2…h5, or 1…Kb6) - **2 K×g7!**, followed by the well-known "chasing two birds at once."

And now, a slightly different version of the same idea.

L. Prokeš, 1947



1 Kc8 Kc6 2 Kb8! Kb5 (else 3 a6) **3 Kb7!**

Thanks to the threat of 4 a6, White wins a tempo and gets into the square of the h-pawn. 3 Kc7? h5 is hopeless.

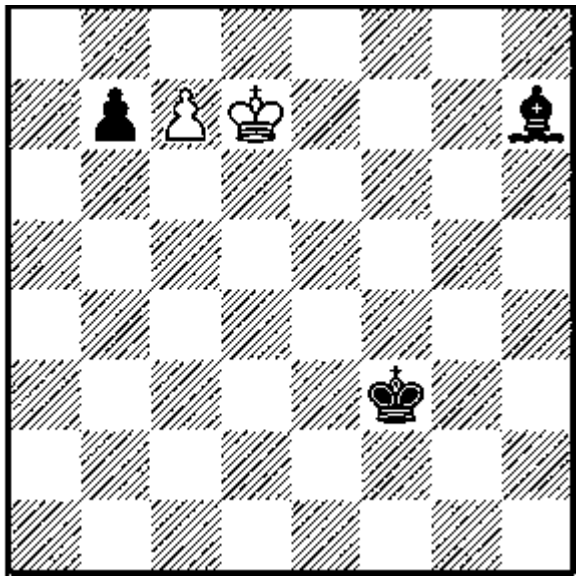
3…K×a5 4 Kc6=.

The study we shall now examine shows us that Réti's idea can be useful in more than just pawn endings.

A. & K. Sarychev, 1928

1-43

W?



1 c8Q? Bf5+ 2 Kc7 B×c8 is hopeless, as is 1 Kd6? Bf5 2 Kc5 Ke4 3 Kb6 Bc8 4 Ka7 b5. The only saving line starts with a paradoxical move that forces the black pawn to advance.

1 Kc8!! b5

As in Réti's study, White is short two tempi.

2 Kd7 b4 3 Kd6 Bf5

Thanks to the threat of 4 c8Q, White wins one tempo; now he wins the other tempo by attacking the black bishop.

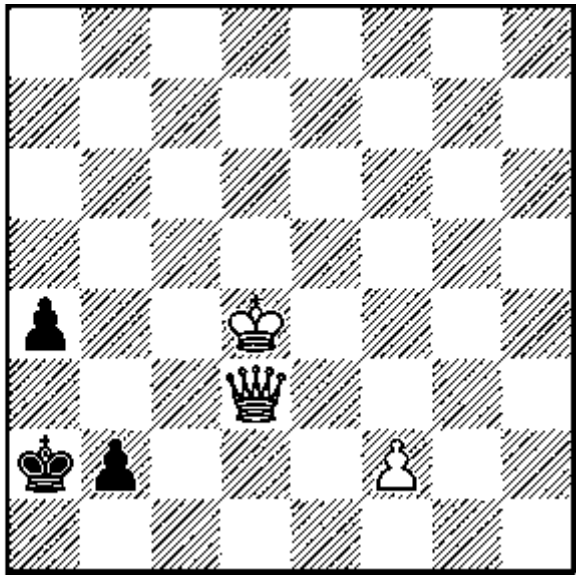
4 Ke5! Bc8 5 Kd4=.

Tragicomedies

Yates – Marshall
Karlsbad 1929

1-44

W



1 Qc4+ Ka3 2 Qb5(c2)? is a mistake, in view of 2…b1Q! 3 Q×b1 stalemate. But White wins easily after 1 Qc2 a3 2 Kc3 Ka1 3 Kb3 b1Q+ 4 Q×b1+ K×b1 5 K×a3, when the black king can't reach the square (remember that when the pawn is on the second rank, the square is constructed

from f3, not from f2).

In the game, White chose a less accurate method of transposing into a pawn endgame.

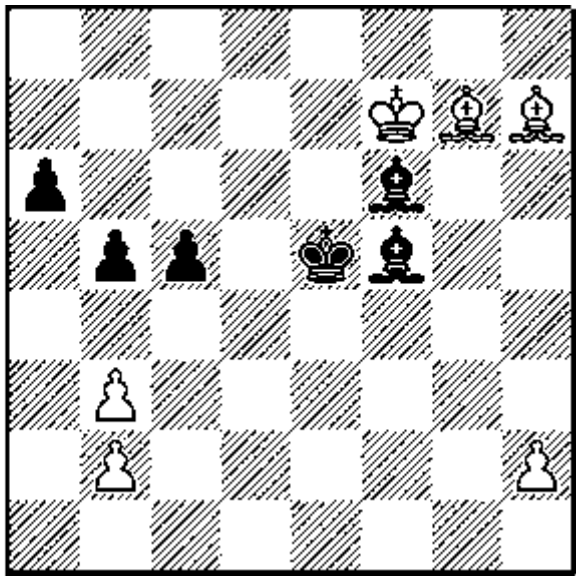
1 Kc3? b1Q 2 Q×b1+ K×b1 3 Kb4

This is a situation known to us from the Prokeš study.

3…Kb2! 4 K×a4 Kc3, with a draw.

Lasker – Tarrasch
St. Petersburg 1914

1-45



B?

Black wins without any trouble after 1…Be6+ 2 Kg6 B×g7 3 K×g7 B×b3 4 h4 Bd1. Tarrasch decided that the pawn endgame would be simpler still. However, he overlooked the very same finesse as Yates did in the preceding example.

1…B×g7? 2 B×f5! K×f5?!

I leave it to my readers to decide on their own if White could have saved himself after 2…Bh8 or 2…Bf6. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to return to this difficult question after we study the chapter on opposite-color bishops.

3 K×g7 a5 4 h4 Kg4

Tarrasch had expected to block White's king from stopping the passed pawn after 5 Kf6? c4 6 bc bc 7 Ke5 c3 8 bc a4 9 Kd4 a3.

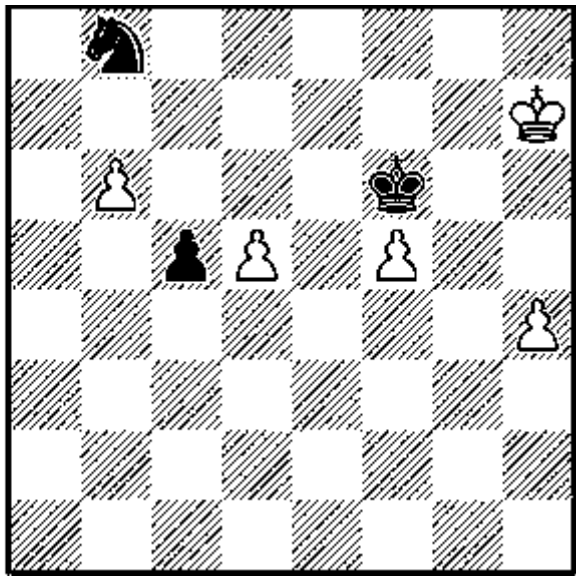
5 Kg6! K×h4 6 Kf5 Kg3

6…c4 7 bc bc 8 Ke4 c3 9 bc a4? 10 Kd3 is now useless.

7 Ke4 Kf2 8 Kd5 Ke3 9 K×c5 Kd3 10 K×b5 Kc2 11 K×a5 K×b3 Draw.

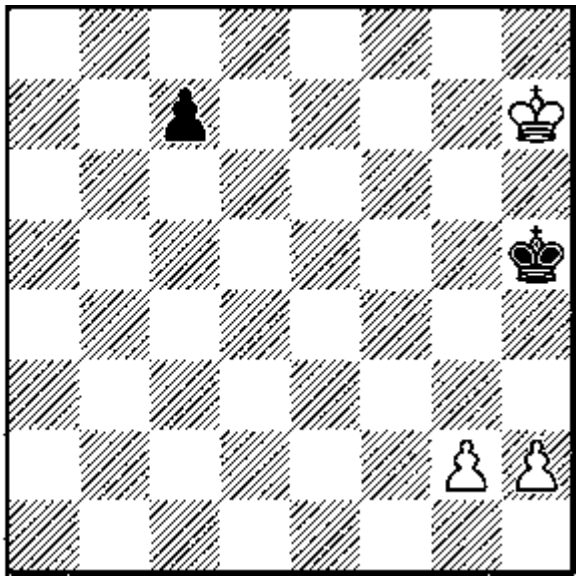
Exercises

1-46



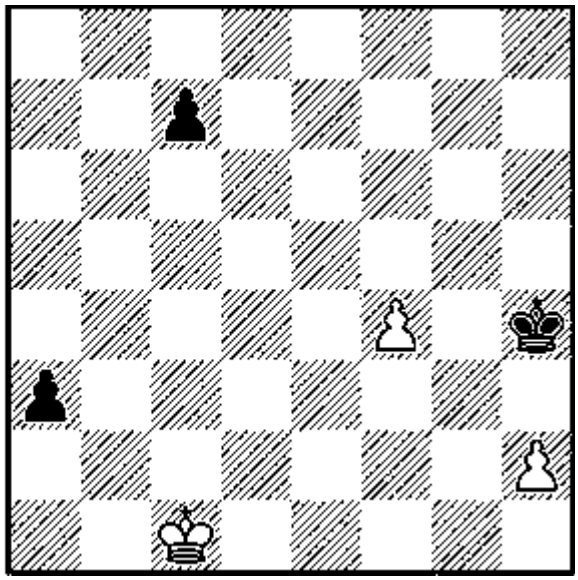
1/13
W?

1-47



1/14
W?/Play

1-48



1/15
W?/Play

The Floating Square

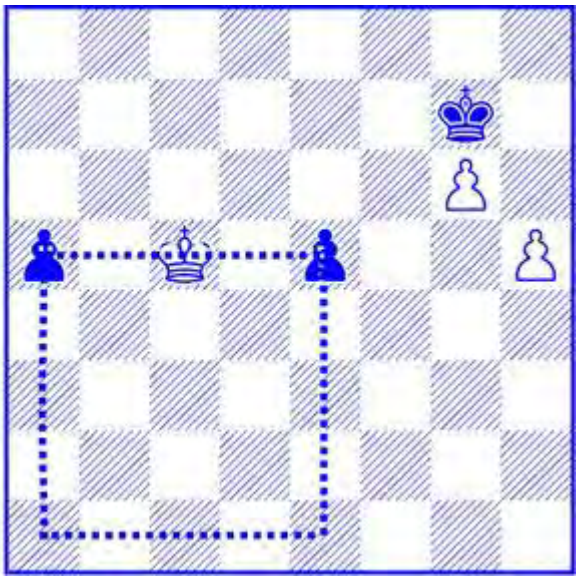
There are cases in which the king must do battle with two separated passed pawns; in these cases, a useful rule is ***the floating-square rule***, suggested by Studenecki in 1939.

If a square whose two corners are occupied by pawns (on the same rank) reaches the edge of the board, then one of those pawns must queen.

If the square does not reach the edge of the board, then the king can hold the pawns. If there are two files between the pawns, the king can capture both; if the distance is any greater, he can

only prevent their further advance.

1-49



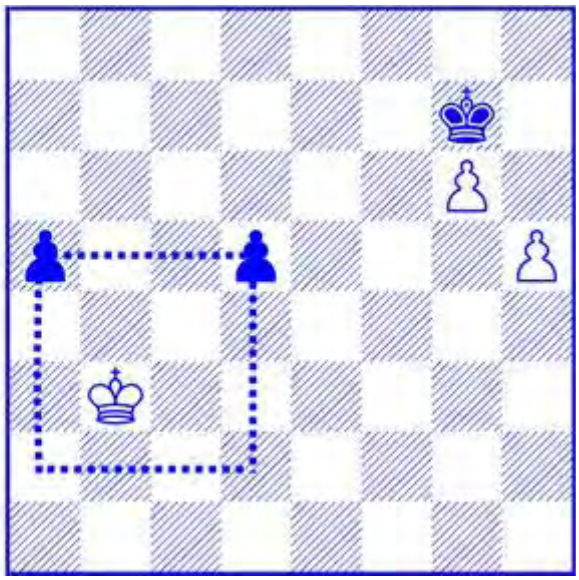
B

The square having reached the edge of the board, the pawns will queen, regardless of whose move it is.

1…a4 2 Kb4 e4 3 K×a4 e3+–

Let's shift the pawns to a6 and e6. The square now reaches only to the second rank, and the position becomes a draw. In fact, 1…a5? would be bad: 2 Kb5 e5 3 K×a5+–; and so is 1…Kh6? 2 Kd6! a5 3 K×e6 a4 4 Kf7 a3 5 g7 a2 6 g8Q a1Q 7 Qg6#. Black must play **1…Kf6 2 Kc6** (but not 2 Kb6? e5 3 Kc5 a5–+) **2…Kg7** (2…e5 3 Kd5 a5 4 g7 K×g7 5 K×e5= is possible, too) **3 Kc5**=.

1-50



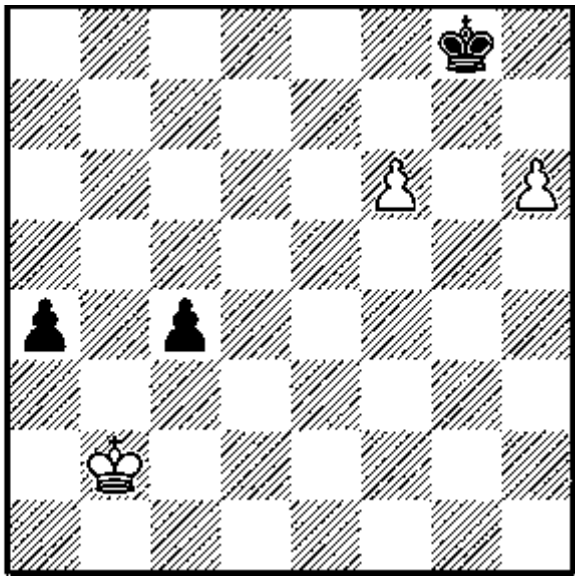
W

This square does not reach the edge of the board, and the distance between the pawns is the most unfavorable: two files. This means the pawns are lost, regardless of who is on move.

1 Ka4 d4 2 Kb3 Kh6 3 Kc4 a4 4 K×d4+–.

Let's examine one more substantive case.

1-51

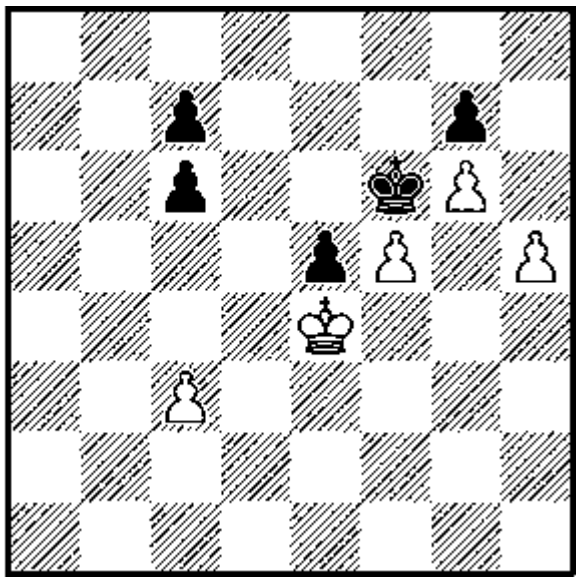


W

On the queenside, the square does not reach the edge of the board, so the pawns can be held: **1 Kc3 a3 2 Kc2.** On the kingside, however, the pawns are already quite far advanced. True, the king can prevent them from queening – so far; but because of zugzwang, he will soon be forced to let them through.

Khalifman – Belikov
Podolsk 1992

1-52



W

1 h6! gh 2 Kf3 h5 3 Kg3 c5

There are two files between the black passed pawns; the square does not reach the edge of the board – that means the pawns must be lost. The attempt to defend them with the king is doomed to failure: 3…Kg7 4 c4 c5 5 Kh3 Kh6 6 Kh4 c6 7 Kh3 Kg7 8 Kg3 (triangulation!) 8…Kh6 9 Kh4⊙ e4 10 Kg3 Kg7 11 Kf4+–

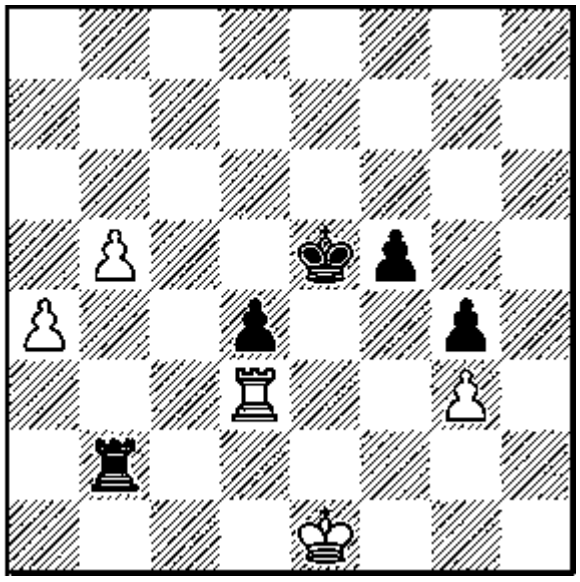
4 Kh4 e4 5 Kg3 Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Stoltz – Nimzovitch
Berlin 1928

1-53

W



White would secure the draw by advancing his a-pawn and putting the rook behind it, thus: 1 a5! R×b5 2 Ra3=, or by 1 Ra3! Ke4 2 a5 d3 3 a6 Ke3 4 R×d3+ K×d3 5 a7=. Instead, Stoltz offered to trade rooks:

1 Rd2?? R×d2! 2 K×d2 f4! 3 gf+ (3 a5 Kd6 4 a6 Kc7) **3…Kd6!**

The square of the d4- and g4-pawns reaches the edge of the board – that means it is impossible to prevent one of them from queening. The same could also be said of White's pawns – but they are much too late. Note the excellent move of the black king – from d6, it is prepared to stop either white pawn with a minimum of effort.

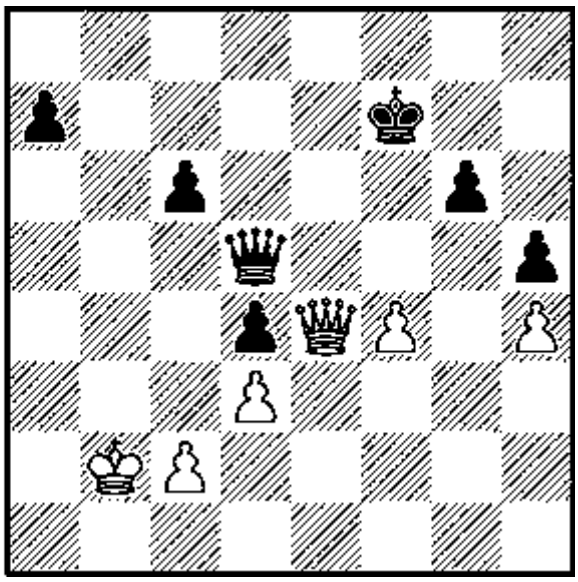
4 a5 g3 5 a6 Kc7 6 Ke2 d3+ 7 K×d3 g2 8 Ke4 g1Q 9 Kf5 Qb6 10 Kg5 Kd7 11 f5 Ke7 White resigned.

We may add to our list of tragicomedies not just White's gross blunder, but also his stubborn refusal to end resistance in a completely hopeless situation.

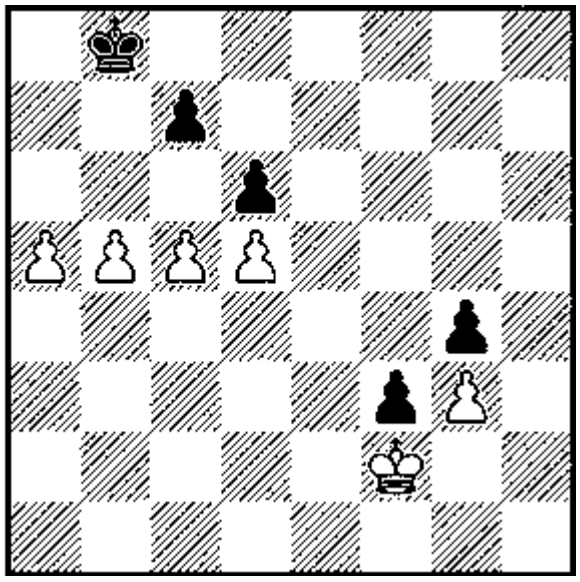
Exercises

1-54

1/16
B?

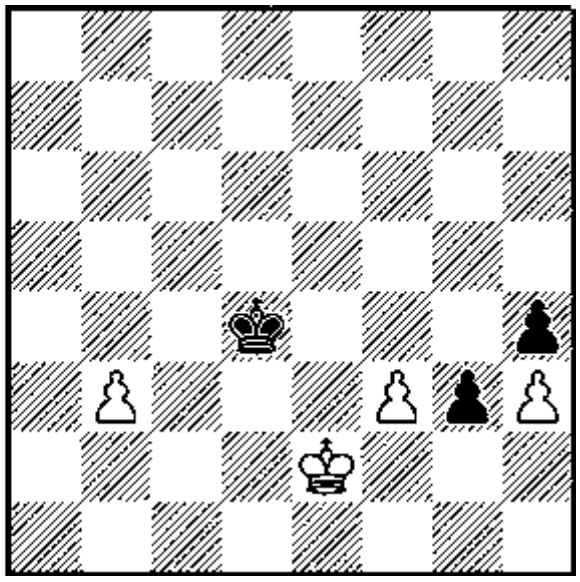


1-55



1/17
B?

1-56

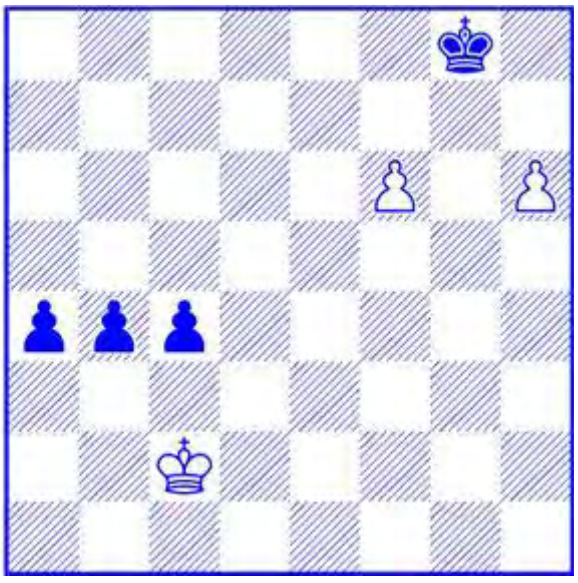


1/18
W?

Three Connected Pawns

It is difficult for the king to fight three connected passed pawns. It has no chance at all if the enemy has any moves in reserve. If not, then a situation of reciprocal zugzwang could arise.

1-57



W?

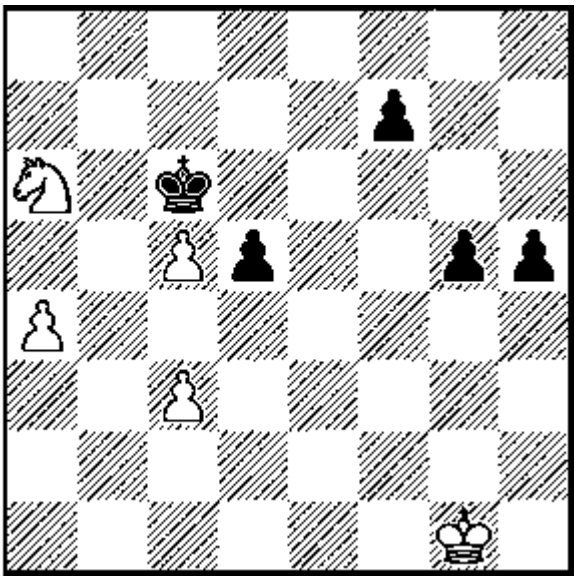
White to move wins by **1 Kb1!** (1…b3 2 Kb2⊙; 1…a3 2 Ka2 c3 3 Kb3⊙; 1…c3 2 Kc2 3 Kb3⊙). Any other first move by White leads to the opposite result.

Nunn – Friedlander

Islington 1968

1-58

W?



On the queenside, we have equality: it would be bad for either side to make the first move there. The question is, who will fall into zugzwang when the kingside pawn moves run out?

White would win by playing 1 Kh2! (or 1 Kg2!?); the important point is to be able to meet 1…h4 with 2 Kh3!, for instance: 2…f5 (2…f6 3 Kg4 f5+ 4 Kh3 f4 5 Kg4⊙) 3 Kh2! g4 (3…f4 4 Kg2) 4 Kg2 f4 (4…h3+ 5 Kg3 f4+ 6 Kh2 f3 7 Kg3⊙; 4…g3 5 Kf3 f4 6 Kg2⊙) 5 Kg1!⊙ Kb7 6 Nb4.

Nothing would be changed by 1…g4 2 Kg3 f5 (2…f6 3 Kf4 f5 4 Kg3) 3 Kg2 f4 4 Kf2(h2); or 1…f5 2 Kg2! (or, with the king at g2 - 2 Kg3 g4 3 Kg2, etc.).

The actual game took an immediate wrong turn:

1 Kf2?? h4! 2 Kf3 (2 Kg2 g4) **2…h3 3 Kg3 g4 4 a5**

White has to be the first to upset the queenside equilibrium. He can no longer place his opponent in zugzwang, because the f-pawn retains the right of moving either one or two squares, according to circumstances (an important technique, to which we shall be returning).

4 Kh2 f6! 5 Kg3 f5⊙ 6 Kh2 f4⊙.

4…f5 5 Nb4+ K×c5 6 a6 Kb6 7 N×d5+ K×a6 8 c4 Kb7 Draw.

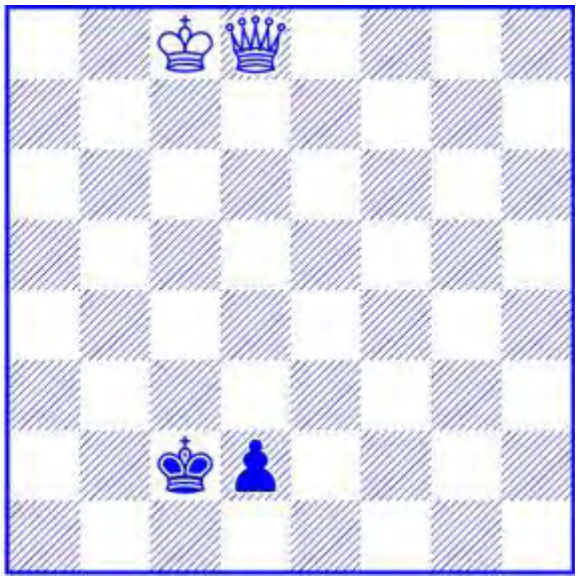
The section which follows is devoted to those cases in which both sides queen simultaneously. In such situations, the game sometimes turns into a “queen versus pawns” endgame – so it makes sense to get to know its theory first.

Queen vs. Pawns

The only cases which have significant practical importance are those elementary endings in which a queen plays against a pawn which has reached the next-to-last rank.

Knight or Center Pawn

The queen generally wins against either a center or knight pawn.

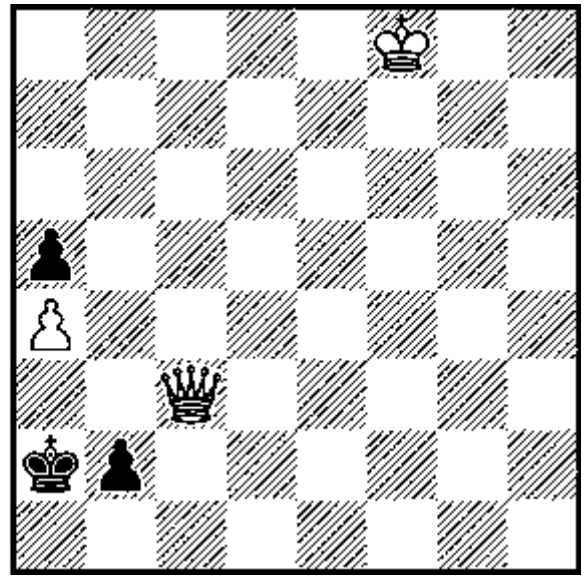


The algorithm is simple: the queen uses either checks or attacks on the pawn to get closer to the enemy king, and drive it onto the d1-square. This gives White's king a tempo to get closer to the pawn. This procedure is repeated as often as necessary.

1 Qc7+ Kb1 2 Qb6+ Kc2 3 Qc5+ Kb1 4 Qb4+ (or 4 Qd4) **4…Kc2 5 Qc4+ Kb2 6 Qd3 Kc1 7 Qc3+ Kd1 8 Kc7 Ke2 9 Qc2** (or 9 Qe5+) **9…Ke1 10 Qe4+ Kf2 11 Qd3 Ke1 12 Qe3+ Kd1 13 Kc6**, etc.

A draw is only very rarely possible – when, for some reason, White is unable to execute this mechanism. An example would be if the white king in our previous diagram were at c7, c6 or c5.

Sometimes, the queen's approach is hindered by the presence of additional pawns on the board, as in the following diagram.



The king cannot be driven to b1, since White is unable to check on the a-file. The most White can achieve is a queen endgame with an extra rook's pawn by 1 Q×a5!? b1Q; but theory considers that endgame to be drawish. And the pawn endgame is not won either: **1 Qc2 Ka1 2 Ke7 b1Q 3 Q×b1+ K×b1 4 Kd6 Kc2 5 Kc5 Kd3 6 Kb5 Kd4 7 K×a5 Kc5**=

However, with the white king at f7, the exchange of queens leads to victory.

1 Qc2 Ka1 2 Ke6 b1Q 3 Q×b1+ K×b1 4 Kd5 Kc2 5 Kc4! (the first, but not the last time we shall see "shouldering" used in this book) 5…Kd2 6 Kb5+–.

Rook or Bishop's Pawn

With a rook or bishop's pawn, the above described winning algorithm does not work – a stalemate defense appears.

1-61

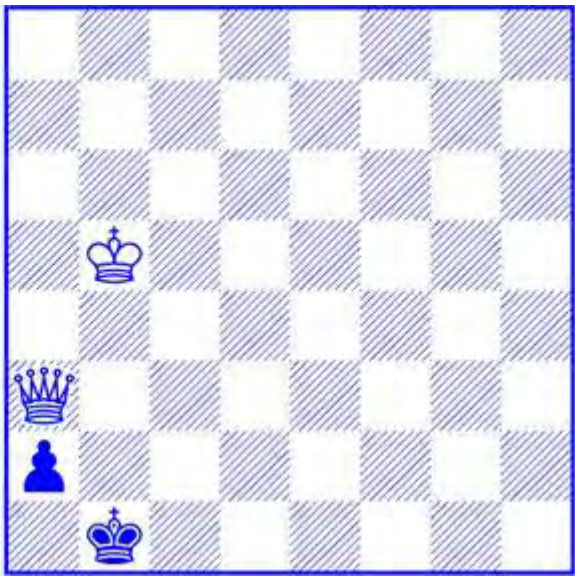
W

1 Qb4+ Ka2 2 Qc3 Kb1 3 Qb3+ Ka1! 4 Qe3 Kb1 5 Qd3 Kb2 6 Qe2!? Ka1!= (but not 6…Kb1? 7 Kc4! c1Q+ 8 Kb3+–).

The win is possible only if the white king stands so close that it can help the white queen mate the enemy king.

Let's put the black king on d2. Now, in order to reach its stalemate haven, it will have to cross the c1-square, giving White the tempo he needs to win: 1 Qd4+ Ke2 2 Qc3 Kd1 3 Qd3+ Kc1 4 Kc4! Kb2 5 Qd2 Kb1 6 Kb3+–.

1-62



W

1 Qb3+ Ka1! 2 Qd1+ Kb2 3 Qd2+ Kb1 4 Kb4! a1Q 5 Kb3+–

Starting with the white king at e4, the mate is delivered in somewhat different fashion: 1 Qb3+ Ka1 2 Qc3+ Kb1 3 Kd3! a1Q 4 Qc2#.

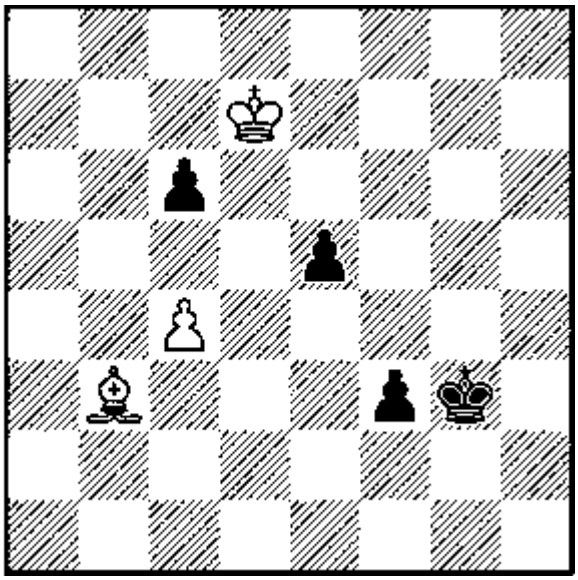
With the king any farther from the pawn, there is no win. I shall limit myself to just that general observation – I do not think it makes any sense to reproduce the "winning zone" for each and every position of the black pawn which I have seen in other endgame texts. It is not worth memorizing – once you have mastered the winning and drawing mechanisms, you can easily figure out for yourself at the board what sort of position you're facing.

Of course, there are exceptions, in which the standard evaluations and techniques are no longer sufficient.

J. Timman, 1980

1-63

W?



1 c5! e4 (1…f2 2 Bc4=) **2 Bd1!! e3** (2…f2 3 Be2=) **3 B×f3 K×f3 4 K×c6 e2 5 Kd7! e1Q 6 c6** (△ 7 c7), and after 6…Qd1(d2)+ 7 Kc8=, Black cannot prevent 8 c7.

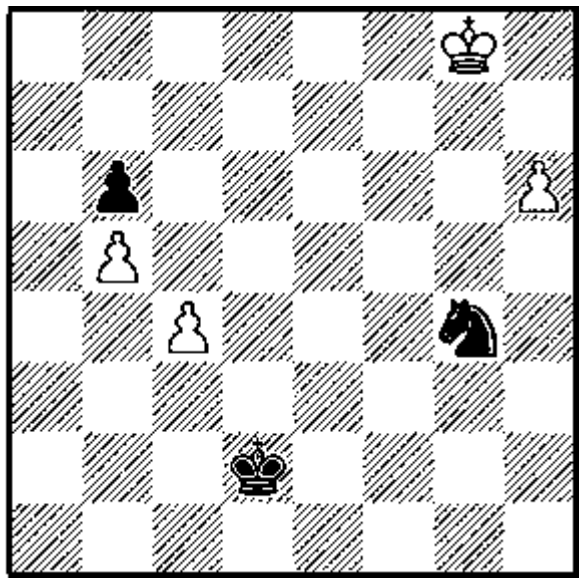
In the final position, it is very important that White's king is on d7. This is why 1 Bd1? c5! would have been a mistake, since the king can't get to d7. And 1 Bc2? f2 2 Bd3 Kf3! (2…e4? 3 Be2=) 3 K×c6 e4 4 Bf1 e3 5 c5 e2–+ is also hopeless.

And Black's king must be drawn to f3 – with the king still on g3, Black wins by 6…Qd1+! 7 Kc8 Qg4+. After 1 c5! e4, the move 2 Bd1!! solves this problem, while 2 K×c6? e3 3 Bc4 e2 4 B×e2 fe 5 Kd7 e1Q leaves the black king on g3. White does no better with 3 Bd5 e2 4 B×f3 e1Q 5 Kd7 – Black manages to bring up his king by: 5…Qd2+ 6 Kc8 Kf4! 7 c6 Ke5 8 c7 Qb4! 9 Bb7 (9 Kd7 Qd6+ 10 Kc8 Qb6! 11 Kd7 Qe6+ 12 Kd8 Kd6–+) 9…Qf8+ 10 Kd7 Qd6+ 11 Kc8 Ke6 12 Kb8 Kd7 13 Bc8+ Kc6 14 Bb7+ Kb6–+.

N. Elkies, 1986

1-64

W?



When is the right time to break with c4-c5? Right now it would obviously be premature: 1 c5? N×h6+ 2 Kf8 bc, or 2…Nf5 3 cb Nd6, and draws.

And on 1 Kg7? N×h6 2 K×h6 Ke3! 3 c5 bc 4 b6 c4 5 b7 c3 6 b8Q c2 7 Kg5! (threatening the check at f4) 7…Kd2!, the white king is too far from the pawn. The single tempo that White gets when Black's king occupies the c1-square is insufficient to win.

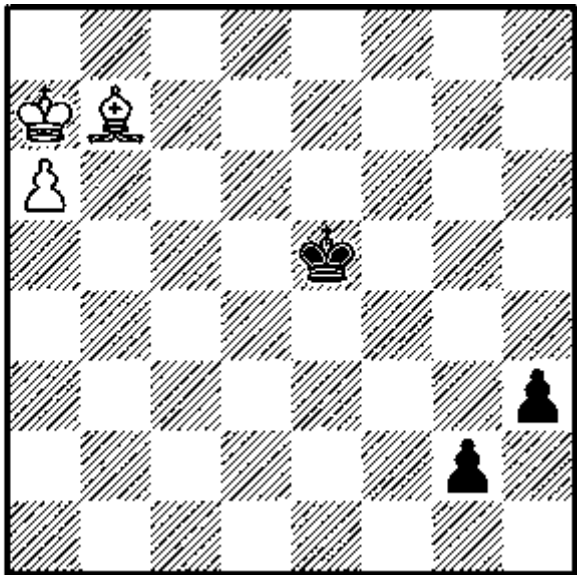
1 h7!! Nf6+ 2 Kg7 N×h7 3 K×h7

Now we have virtually the same position as in the preceding variation, with the king standing even farther from the queenside. But here, the h6-square is open!

3…Ke3! 4 c5 bc 5 b6 c4 6 b7 c3 7 b8Q c2 8 Qh2!! c1Q (8…Kd3 9 Qf4+–) **9 Qh6+**.

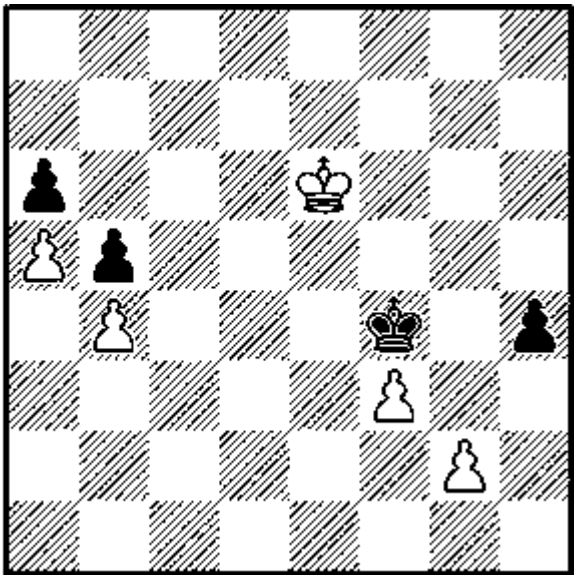
Exercises

1-65



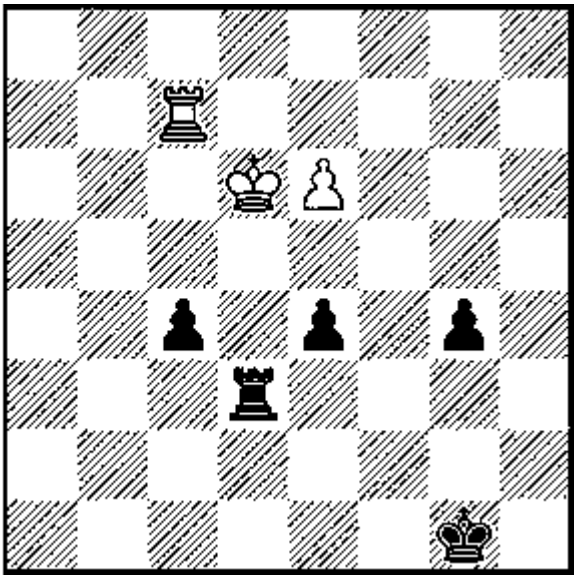
1/19
W?

1-66



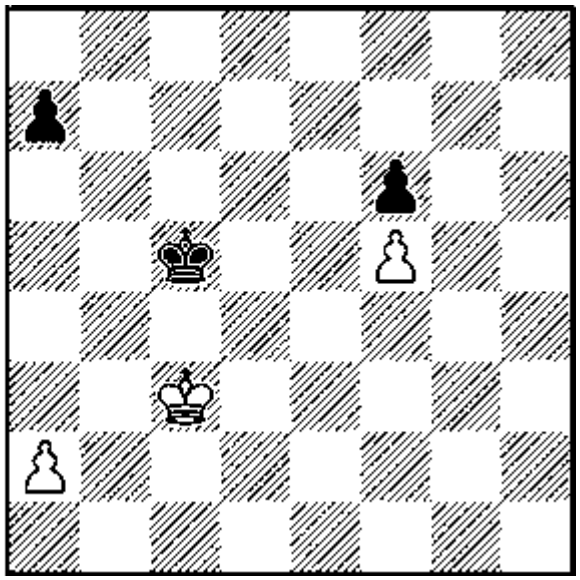
1/20
W?

1-67



1/21
W?

1-68



1/22
W?/Play

Pawn Races

Let's examine the sort of situation where both players advance simultaneously and queen at the same time, or almost at the same time. Here, the following outcomes are possible:

(1) One rook's pawn prevents the other rook's pawn from queening;

(2) The pawn queens with check, and thereby prevents the enemy pawn from queening; or

(3) We get a "queen vs. pawn (or pawns)" endgame.

Or, if both pawns queen, then:

(4) One queen is lost to a "skewer" check along the file or diagonal;

(5) Mate follows;

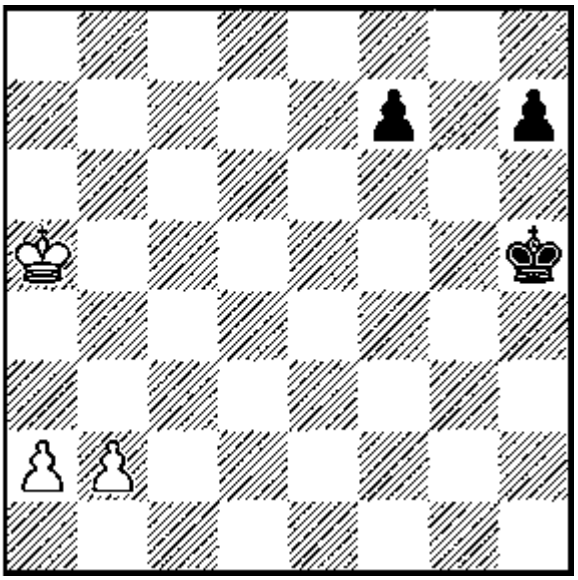
(6) The queens are exchanged, after which we once again have a pawn ending; or

(7) We get a queen ending (either an elementary one, or one with some play to it).

In order to get an idea of all these possibilities (except perhaps the last one), we shall present a sizeable number of examples. In the previous chapter we have already seen an ending which transposed into a "queen vs. pawns" endgame; and earlier, we also saw cases where the king fell into check, or the queen was lost to a skewer check (see exercises 1/4, 1/7, 1/8, 1/10). Quite often, the chief problem of a position is either to draw the enemy king onto a bad square, or to avoid such a square with one's own king.

G. Walker, 1841

1-69



W

1 b4 f5 2 b5 f4 3 b6 f3 4 b7 f2 5 b8Q f1Q 6 Qb5+! Q×b5 7 K×b5 Kg4 8 a4, and the h-pawn will never become a queen.

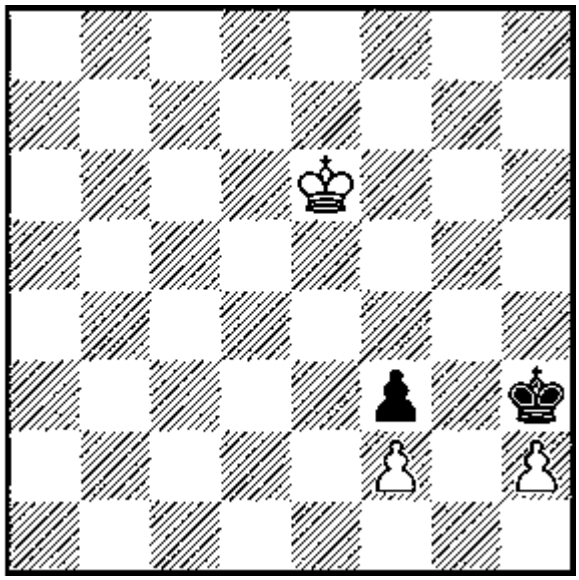
This simple example illustrates Points 1 and 6 of the above list; the following example is for

Points 2 and 4 (perhaps the most important ones).

J. Moravec, 1925

1-70

W?



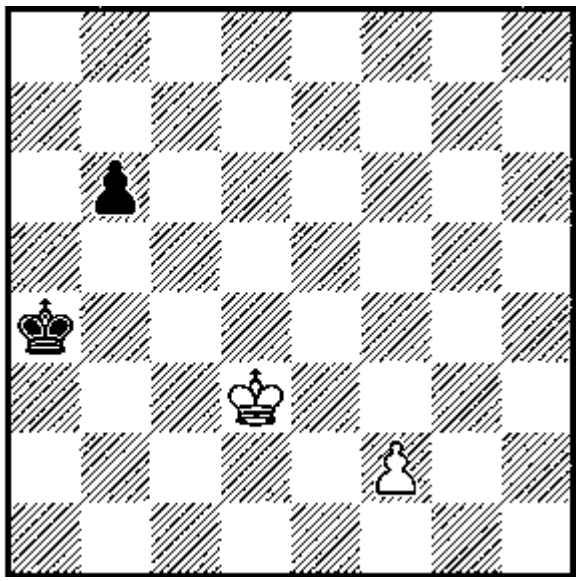
The only move to draw is **1 Kd5! Kg2!** (1…K×h2? 2 Ke4 Kg2 3 Ke3⊙+–) **2 h4**, and White's pawn queens immediately after Black's.

On 1 Kf5? Kg2! the black pawn queens with check; while on 1 Ke5? Kg2! White's queen will be lost after …Qa1+.

N. Grigoriev, 1928

1-71

W?



Black's king is in the square of the f-pawn, so the hasty 1 f4? Kb5! leads only to a draw. White has to block the king's path to the kingside ("shouldering"!).

1 Kd4! b5

The other defensive plan gets instructively refuted: 1…Kb5 2 Kd5! Ka6 3 f4 Kb7 4 f5 Kc7 5 Ke6 Kd8 6 Kf7! b5 7 f6 b4 8 Kg7 b3 9 f7 b2 10 f8Q+. In a practical game, nearly every pawn for some reason ends up queening with check; there are times, however, when you have to work a little bit for it!

Interestingly, if we place the pawn on b7 in the starting position, Black saves himself by 1…Kb5! 2 Kd5 Kb6! 3 Kd6 Ka7 4 f4 b5.

2 f4 b4 3 f5 b3

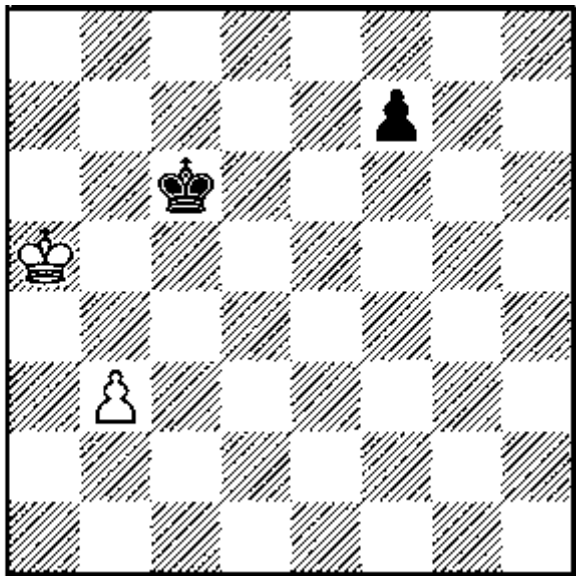
Now the enemy king must be drawn to a checkable square.

4 Kc3! Ka3 5 f6 b2 6 f7 b1Q 7 f8Q+, mating or winning the queen.

Tragicomedies

Ljubojevic – Browne
Amsterdam 1972

1-72

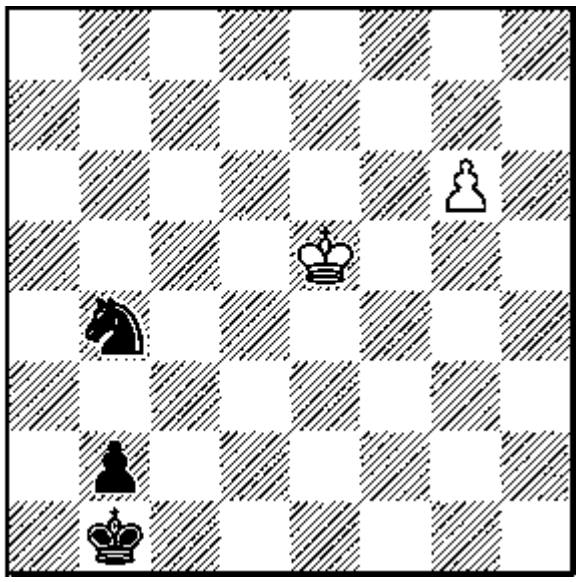


B?

Recognize this position? Yes, it is the Grigoriev study we just examined, except with colors reversed and the black king positioned differently (which has no meaning here). 1…Kd5! would have won; instead, GM Browne played **1…f5??**, and after **2 Kb4**, a draw was agreed.

Mohr – Conquest
Gausdal 1989

1-73



B?

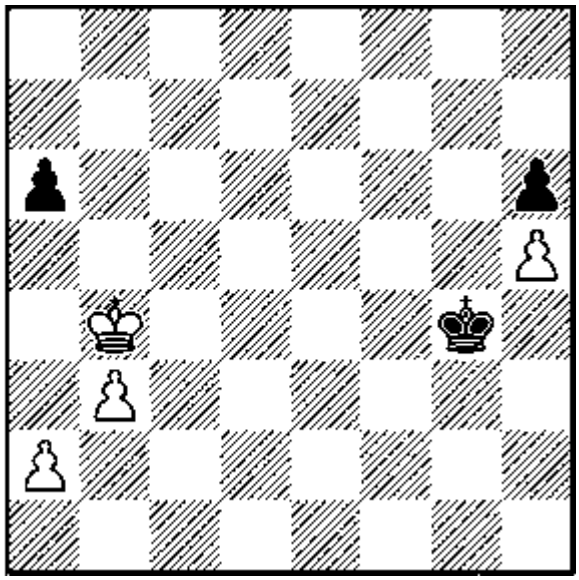
After Conquest's move, **1…Kc1?**, the position became drawn: **2 g7 b1Q 3 g8Q**=.

Black could have won by 1…Nd5! 2 K×d5 (2 g7 Ne7 3 Ke6 Ng8 4 Kf7 Kc2 leads to a won "queen vs. knight's pawn" endgame) 2…Kc1 3 g7 b1Q 4 g8Q Qb3+.

Gavrikov – Kharitonov
USSR ch(1), Sverdlovsk 1984

1-74

W?



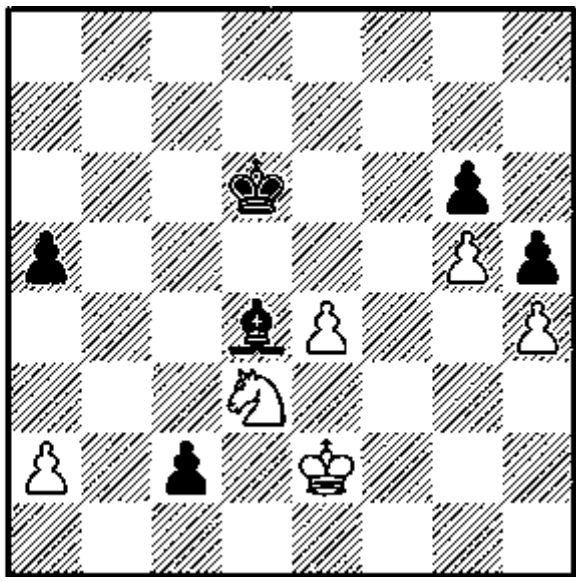
The winning idea is 1 Kc5! K×h5 2 b4 Kg4 3 a4 h5 4 b5 ab 5 a5!, when the white pawn queens, while preventing the black one from doing so.

The game line was **1 Ka5? K×h5 2 K×a6 Kg4 3 b4 h5 4 b5 h4 5 b6 h3 6 b7 h2 7 b8Q h1Q**, with a drawn queen endgame.

Golombek – Keres
Margate 1939

1-75

B?



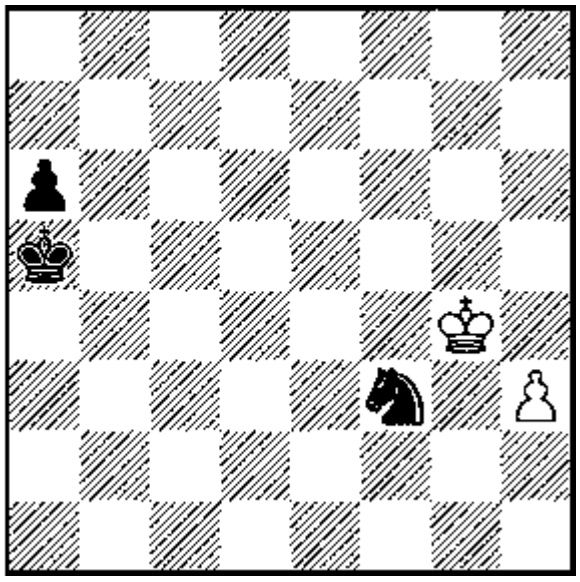
1…Be5 2 Kd2 Bg3 3 K×c2 B×h4 would have won. Even easier was 1…Bc3! with zugzwang: if 2 Ke3, then 2…Be1.

Instead, Keres played **1…Bb2?**, and his opponent resigned, believing that after **2 Kd2 c1Q+ 3 N×c1 B×c1+ 4 K×c1 Ke5 5 Kc2 K×e4**, his attack on the a5-pawn would come too late: 6 Kb3 Kf4 7 Ka4 Kg4 8 K×a5 K×h4 9 a4 K×g5 10 Kb6 h4 11 a5 h3 12 a6 h2 13 a7 h1Q–+.

But White's king can also attack the other black pawn: **6 Kc3! Kf4 7 Kd4 Kg4 8 Ke5 K×h4 9 Kf6 Kg4 10 K×g6 h4 11 Kf6 h3 12 g6**, with a draw.

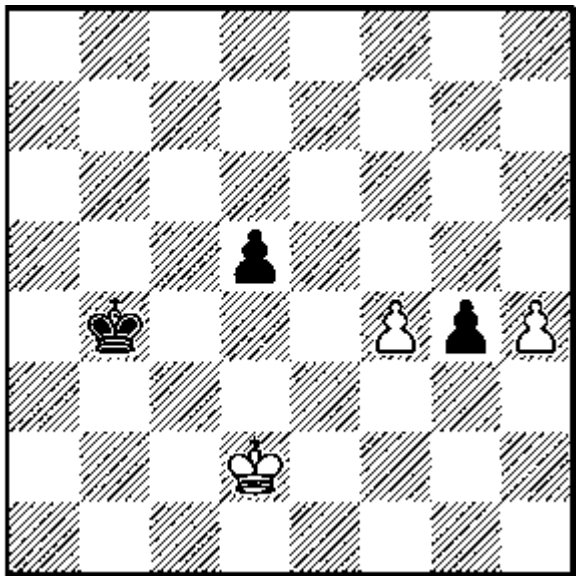
Exercises

1-76



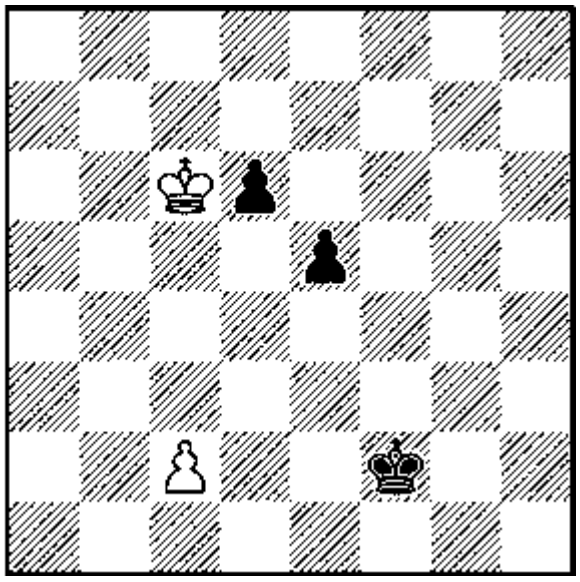
1/23
B?

1-77



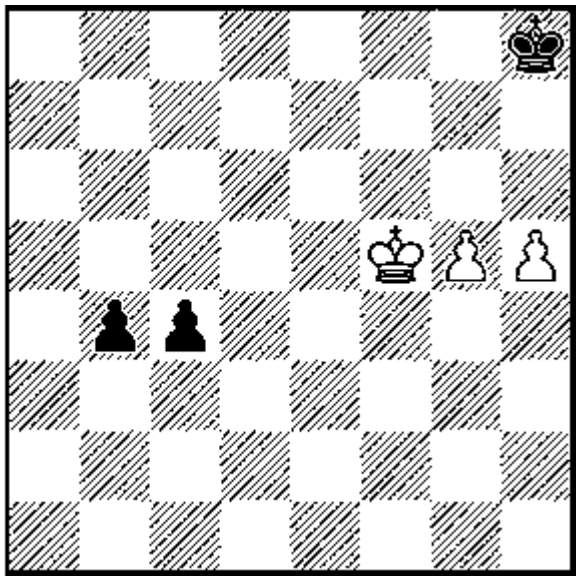
1/24
W?

1-78



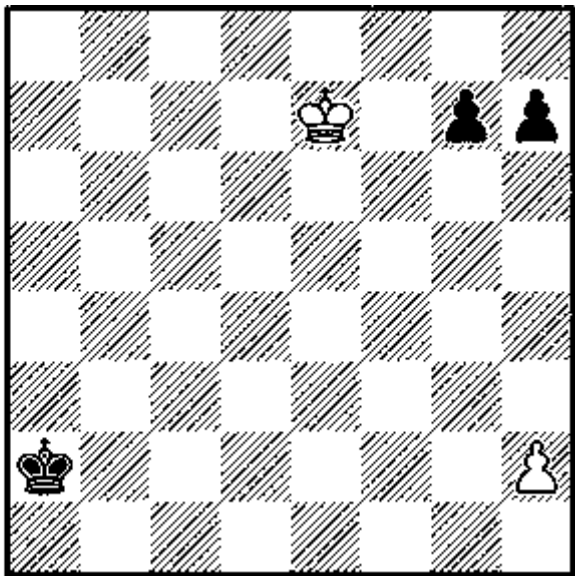
1/25
W?

1-79



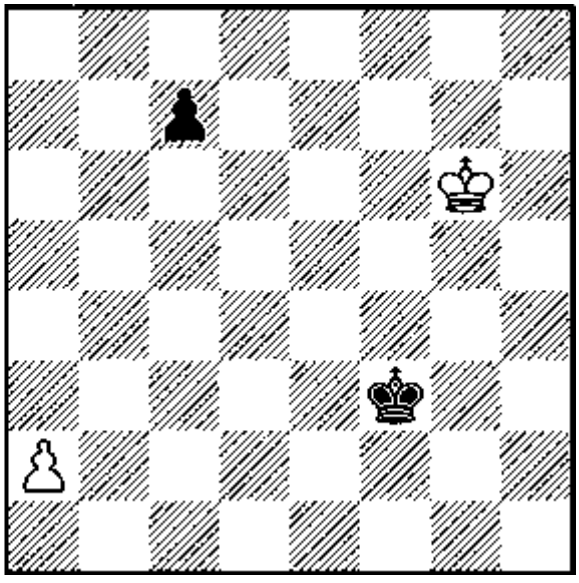
1/26
W?

1-80



1/27
W?

1-81



1/28
W?/Play

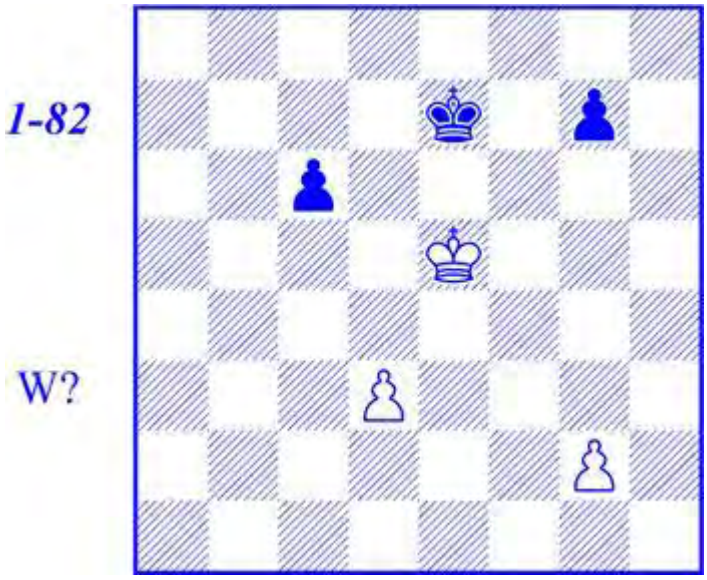
The Active King

King activity is the most important factor in the evaluation of position in a pawn endgame. In fact, not just in pawn endgames – in **any** endgame. But in pawn endgames, where there are no other pieces on the board, this is perhaps an especially important factor.

The influence the degree of king activity has on the battle's outcome is obvious in many of the preceding and succeeding examples. Here, we examine two vitally important means of exploiting an active king's position: playing for zugzwang, and the widening of the beachhead.

Zugzwang

M. Dvoretsky, 2000



1 g3! Kd7 2 g4 Ke7 3 g5⊙

3 d4? Kd7 4 Kf5 Kd6 5 Kg6 Kd5 6 K×g7 K×d4 would be less exact, as the pawns both queen. However, White could transpose moves by 3 Kf5 Kd6 4 g5! (4 Kg6? Ke5! 5 K×g7 Kf4 6 Kf6 K×g4=) 4…Ke7 (4…Kd5 5 Kg6 Kd4 6 K×g7 K×d3 7 g6 c5 8 Kf6 c3 9 g7 c3 10 g8Q c2 11 Qg5+–) 5 Kg6 etc.

Let's think about the position after 3 g5. White's king dominates the board – that is why zugzwang is unavoidable. In fact, whichever pawn Black moves is bound to be lost (3…c5 4 Kd5, or 3…g6 4 d4⊙). Retreating the king to f7 clears the way for his opponent to go after the c6-pawn. That leaves just one move; but after that move, White finally executes his main plan – getting his king to h7.

3…Kd7 4 Kf5 Ke7 5 Kg6 Kf8 6 Kh7 Kf7 7 d4

One final, decisive zugzwang.

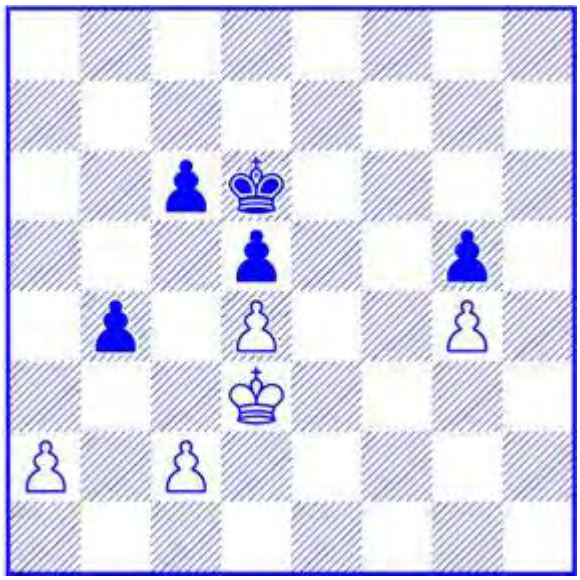
If it were Black's move in the starting position, then after 1…Kd7, 2 g4! would lead to the win. It sometimes makes quite a difference if you have a choice between moving a pawn one or two squares. For a more detailed examination of this, see "Steinitz's Rule," and the chapters which follow.

Widening the Beachhead

Hansen – Nimzovitch

Randers simul 1925

1-83



B?

Who stands better? White intends to play c2-c3, obtaining an outside passed pawn, which will secure him a decisive advantage (for example, after 1…c5? 2 dc+ K×c5 3 c3).

Nimzovitch hits upon the correct plan – he activates his king, even if it means sacrificing a pawn.

1…Kc7! 2 c3 Kb6! 3 cb Kb5 4 Kc3 Ka4⊙

As Black had foreseen, it is zugzwang. White resigned, since he has to lose all his queenside pawns: 5 Kc2 K×b4 (White still has the outside passed pawn, but the activity of Black's king means far more here) 6 Kd3 Ka3 7 Kc3 K×a2 8 Kb4 Kb2 9 Kc5 Kc3–+.

Let's look at **3 c4** (instead of 3 cb). White will continue by exchanging pawns at d5. It is not hard to see that b5-b3 and a4-b2 are corresponding squares; after that, we can establish a third pair of corresponding squares: a5-c2. Now we understand that Black must inevitably take advantage of this correspondence (since he can wait on either of the equivalent squares b6 and a6, while White cannot).

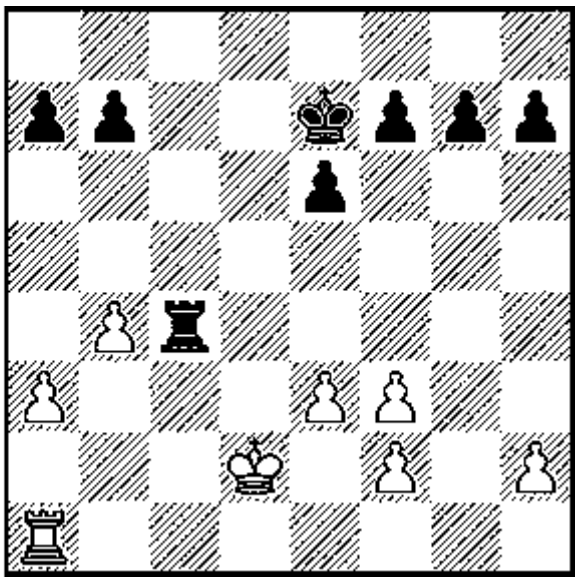
3…Ka6! 4 cd cd 5 Kc2 Ka5⊙ 6 Kb2 Ka4⊙ 7 Kc2 Ka3 8 Kb1 b3 9 Ka1 Kb4 10 Kb2 ba

In order to win, Black cleared a path for his king towards the center. This is, in fact, what "widening the beachhead" means – trading off pawns, with the idea of clearing a path for the king.

Let's examine another classic endgame.

Cohn – Rubinstein
St. Petersburg 1909

1-84



W

With 1 f4!, White would have had an inferior but defensible position. Instead, he decided to

exchange rooks, because he had misjudged the pawn endgame.

1 Rc1? R×c1 2 K×c1 Kf6 3 Kd2 Kg5

Rubinstein sends his king to h3, in order to tie White's king to the defense of the weak pawn at h2. It is not difficult to calculate that White's counterattack with 4 Kd3 Kh4 5 Kc4 comes too late.

4 Ke2 Kh4 5 Kf1 Kh3 6 Kg1 e5 7 Kh1 b5!

It is useful to fix the queenside pawns, while Black also leaves himself the reserve tempo a7-a6. White could have prevented this by playing 7 a4!?, but it would not have altered the assessment of the position.

8 Kg1 f5

Black's further plan is to "widen the beachhead" – clear a path for his king to the queenside via pawn exchanges.

9 Kh1 g5 10 Kg1 h5 11 Kh1 g4

11…h4 12 Kg1 g4 13 fg K×g4 14 Kg2 h3+ is also strong.

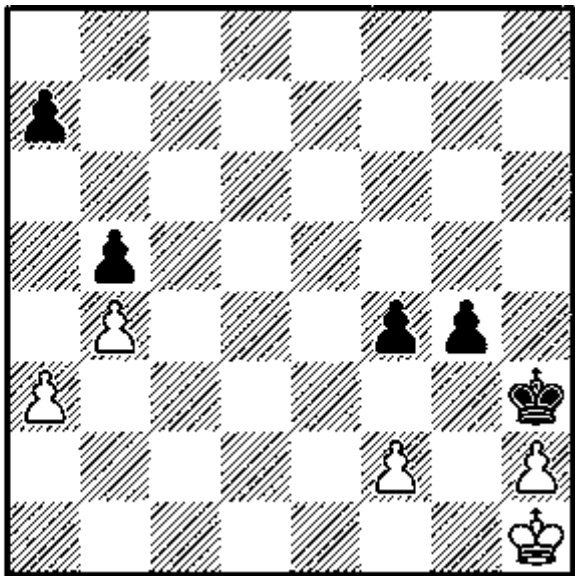
12 e4 fe! 13 fe

13 fg hg 14 Kg1 e3 15 fe e4 16 Kg1 g3 is no better.

13…h4 14 Kg1 g3 15 hg hg White resigned.

12 fg (instead of 12 e4) 12…fg! 13 Kg1 e4 14 Kh1 h4 15 Kg1 g3 changes nothing – Black still wins. However, taking with the other pawn – 12…hg? – would have been a serious inaccuracy: 13 Kg1 f4 14 ef ef 15 Kh1.

1-85



B?

Here, widening the beachhead no longer wins: 15…g3? 16 hg fg 17 fg (17 Kg1=) 17…K×g3 18 Kg1 Kf3 19 Kf1 Ke3 20 Ke1 Kd3 21 Kd1 Kc3 22 a4!=.

The right plan, 15…f3! 16 Kg1 Kh4, was pointed out by Jonathan Mestel.

17 Kh1 Kg5 18 h3 gh 19 Kh2 Kg4 20 Kg1 Kf4 21 Kh2 Ke4 22 K×h3 (22 Kg3 h2!) 22…Kd3 23 Kg4 Ke2 24 Kg3 a6–+ (here is where the reserve tempo comes in handy!)

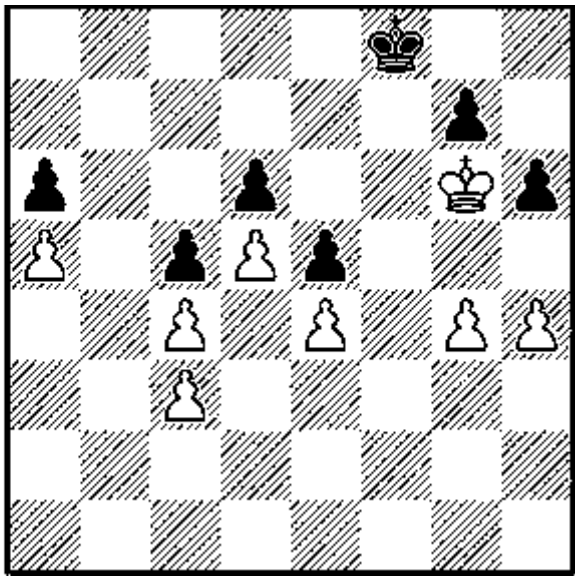
17 Kf1 Kh5! 18 Ke1 Kg5⊙ 19 Kf1 (19 Kd2 Kh4–+) 19…Kf4 20 Ke1 Ke4 21 Kd2 Kd4 22 Kc2 Kc4 23 Kd2 Kb3 24 Ke3 K×a3 25 Kf4 K×b4 26 K×g4 a5–+.

Tragicomedies

Horowitz – Denker
Philadelphia 1936

1-86

W?



Here is how the game actually ended: **1 Kh7 Kf7 2 Kh8 Kf8 3 g5** Black resigned.

Zinar has shown that every move played by both sides was a mistake – except for the last one. His analysis follows:

(1) White should not take his king into the corner. The correct plan to exploit his advantage is – widening the beachhead!

1 g5! hg 2 K×g5 Kf7 3 h5 Ke7 4 Kg6 Kf8 5 h6! Kg8! 6 Kh5! gh 7 K×h6 Kf7 8 Kh7 (the opposition) **8…Kf6 9 Kg8** (now, an outflanking) **9…Kg5 10 Kf7 Kf4 11 Ke6 K×e4 12 K×d6 Kf4 13 K×c5 e4 14 d6 e3 15 d7 e2 16 d8Q e1Q 17 Qf6+**, with an easily won queen endgame.

(2) With 1…h5! (instead of 1…Kf7?), Black would have drawn: 2 g5 Kf7 3 Kh8 Kg6! 4 Kg8 stalemate; or 2 gh Kf7 3 h6 g6! 6 Kh8 Kf8=.

(3) But 2 Kh8? lets slip the win. Also insufficient was 2 g5? h5! 3 g6+ (3 Kh8 Kg6!) 3…Kf6 4 Kg8 K×g6 5 Kf8 Kf6 6 Ke8 g5 7 hg+ K×g5 8 Ke7 h4 9 K×d6 h3 10 Kc7 h2 11 d6 h1Q 12 d7 Qh7 13 Kc8 Qh3=.

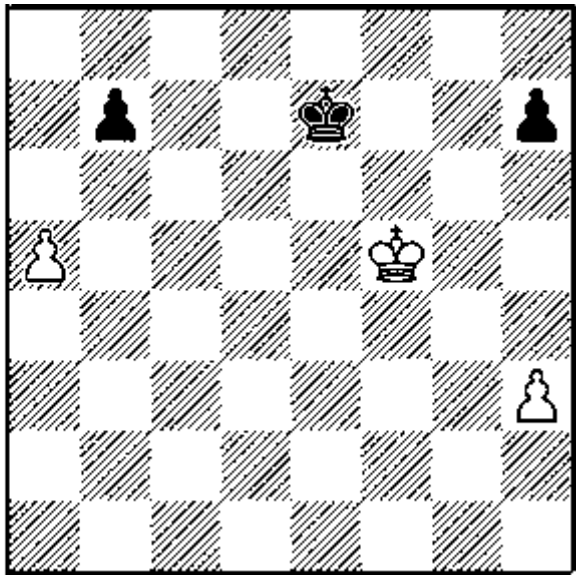
The right move was 2 h5! Kf6 (we have already seen what happens after 2…Kf8 3 Kg6 Kg8 4 Kf5 Kf7 5 g5 hg 6 K×g5) 3 Kg8 g6 (3…g5 4 Kh7) 4 Kf8! gh 5 gh Kg5 6 Ke7 K×h5 7 K×d6 Kg4 8 K×e5+–.

(4) And retreating the king to f8 was the decisive mistake. Black could still have drawn with 2…h5! 3 g5 Kg6!, or 3 gh Kf8 4 h6 g6!.

Exercises

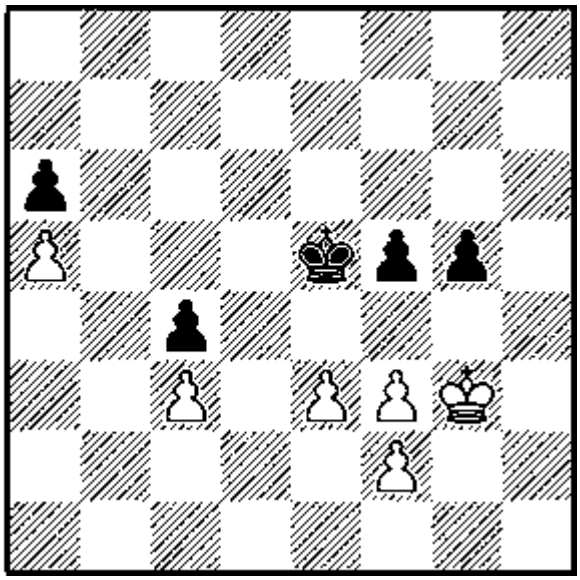
1-87

1/29
W?



1-88

1/30
W?



The King Routes

In this section, we shall examine some different types of king maneuvers.

Zigzag

The laws of geometry, as we have known them since grade school, have no relevance on the chessboard. There, a straight line is not the shortest distance between two points (or squares) – if the king follows a broken-line path, it is by no means longer. This phenomenon is exploited both in the Réti idea we have already examined, and in the "shoulder block" we shall learn later on.

Here, we shall speak of a technique closely connected with the simultaneous advance of pawns we just studied. To be more exact: we shall be speaking of two techniques, which look very similar. Let's call them "zigzag."

N. Grigoriev, 1928

1-89

W?

The direct 1 g4? leads only to a draw: 1…b5 2 g5 b4 3 g6 b3+ 4 Kc3 b2 5 g7 b1Q 6 g8Q+ Ka1!=.

1 Kc3! Ka3 2 Kc4 Ka4 3 g4 b5+ 4 Kd3!

Here is the zigzag! The king returns to c2, while avoiding the pawn check.

4…Ka3 5 g5 b4 6 g6 b3 7 g7 b2 8 Kc2! (drawing the king into check) **8…Ka2 9 g8Q+**.

The other form of zigzag occurs when the king has to avoid a check from a newly-promoted queen.

J. Moravec, 1952

1-90

W?

White is outside the square of the a-pawn. His only hope is Réti's idea.

1 Kg4 a5 2 Kf5! a4

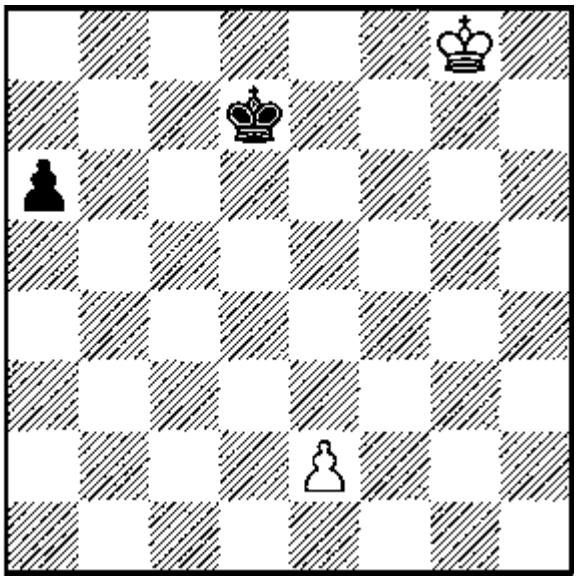
Otherwise, the king gets into the square. Now White would lose by 3 e6? Kd8 4 Kf6 Ke8; and 3 Kf6? a3 4 e6 a2 5 e7 a1Q+ is also bad. The king must avoid the f6-square.

3 Kg6! a3 4 e6 a2 5 e7 Kd7 6 Kf7=.

Exercises

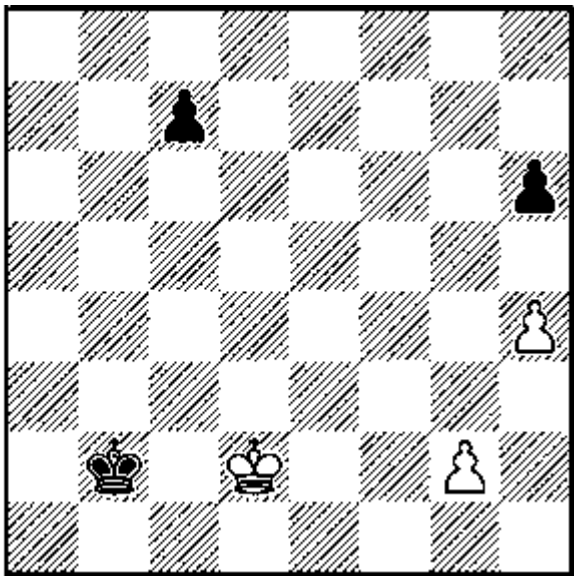
1-91

1/31
W?



How should this game end?

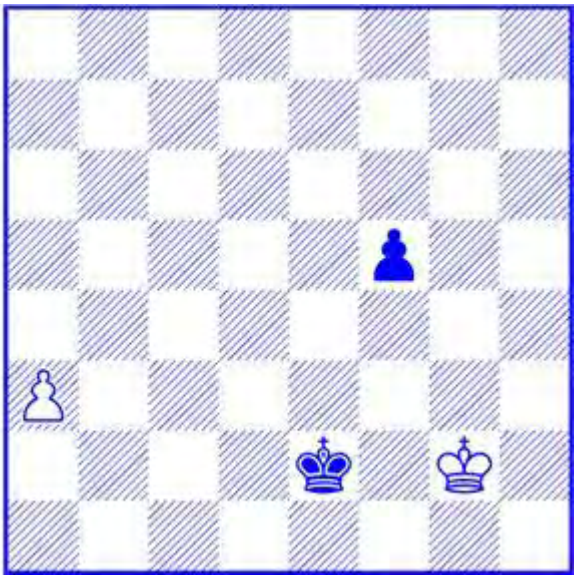
1-92



1/32
W?/Play

The Pendulum

1-93

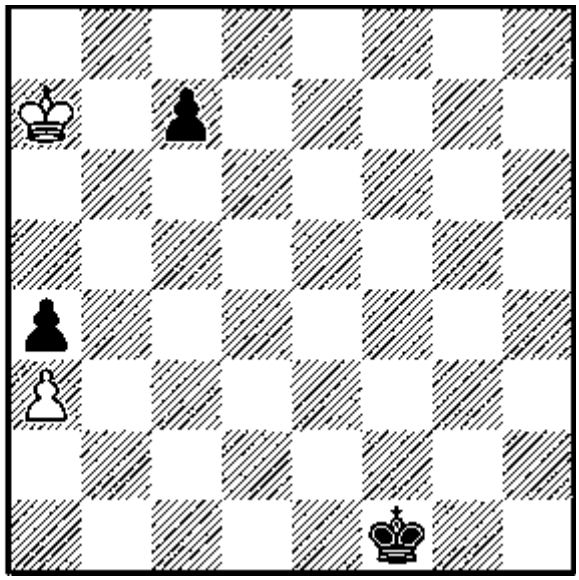


W

1 Kg3! Ke3 2 Kg2! Ke2 (2…f4 3 Kf1) **3 Kg3**=
This elementary defensive technique appears frequently.

Exercises

1-94



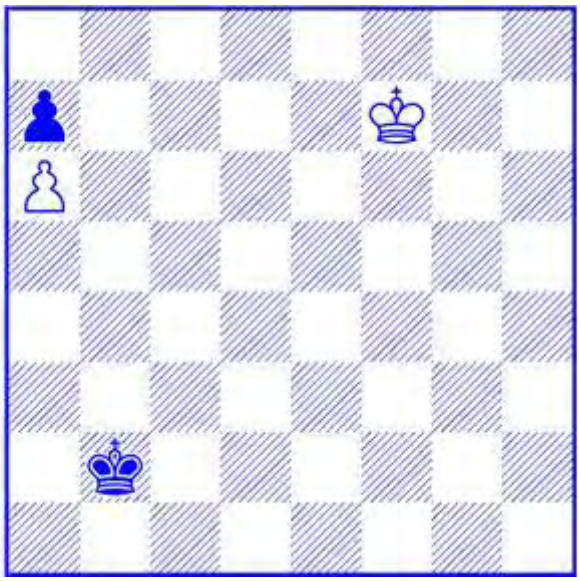
1/33
W?

Shouldering

Quite often, one must choose a route for the king that gives a "shouldering" to the enemy king – that is, it prevents the enemy from arriving in time at an important part of the board.

Schlage – Ahues
Berlin 1921

1-95



White must inevitably win the pawn at a7. Black can save himself only if he can succeed in locking the white king into the corner with …Kc7.

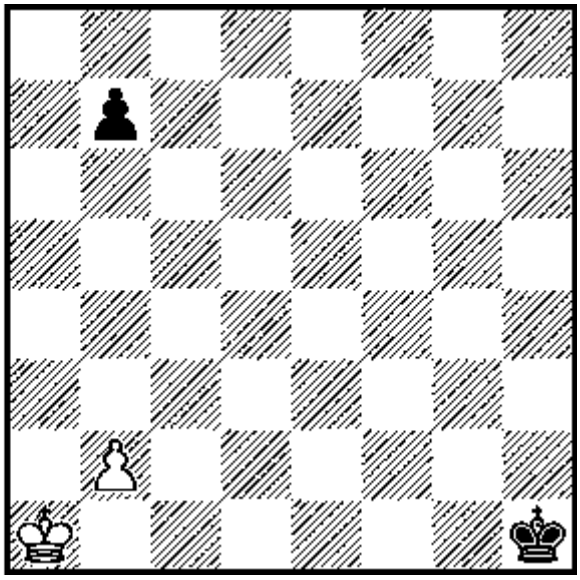
The game was drawn after 1 Ke6 Kc3 2 Kd6? Kd4 3 Kc6 Ke5 4 Kb7 Kd6 5 K×a7 Kc7.

Maizelis demonstrated a win for White by **1 Ke6! Kc3 2 Kd5!+–**

White's king approaches the a7-pawn while simultaneously "shouldering" the enemy king, keeping it from approaching the c7-square.

J. Moravec, 1940

1-96



White only gets a draw out of 1 Ka2? Kg2 2 Kb3 Kf3 3 Kc4 Ke4 4 b4 Ke5 5 Kc5 (White's king does manage to shoulder the enemy king, but here this is insufficient) 5…Ke6 6 Kb6 (6 b5 Kd7 7 Kb6 Kc8=) 6…Kd5 7 K×b7 Kc4=.

It is important to keep Black's king farther away from the pawns; and for this, White needs to meet him halfway.

1 Kb1! Kg2 2 Kc2 Kf3 3 Kd3! Kf4 4 Kd4 Kf5 5 Kd5 Kf6 6 Kd6 Kf7

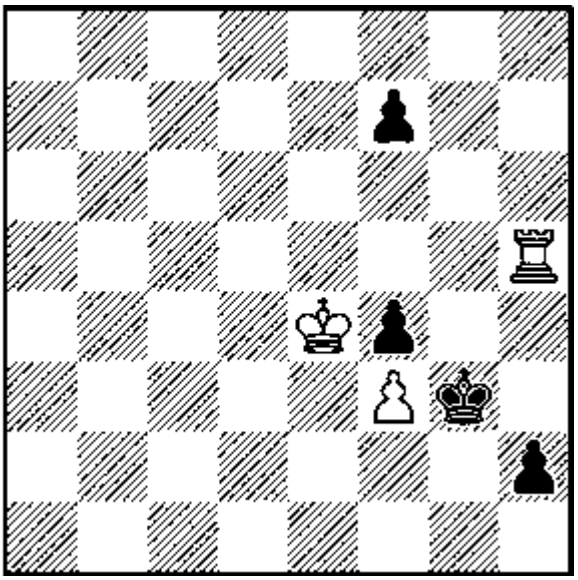
If 6…Kf5, then 7 b4 Ke4 8 b5 Kd4 9 b6 with the idea of 10 Kc7+–.

7 b4 Ke8 8 Kc7 b5 9 Kc6+–.

Tragicomedies

Rogers – Shirov
Groningen 1990

1-97



B?

Black would have drawn had he continued 1…f5+! 2 K×f5 (2 Kd4 Kg2) 2…K×f3 3 R×h2 Kg3 △ 4…f3. 1…f6! is also possible: 2 Rh8 f5+ (or even 2…Kg2).

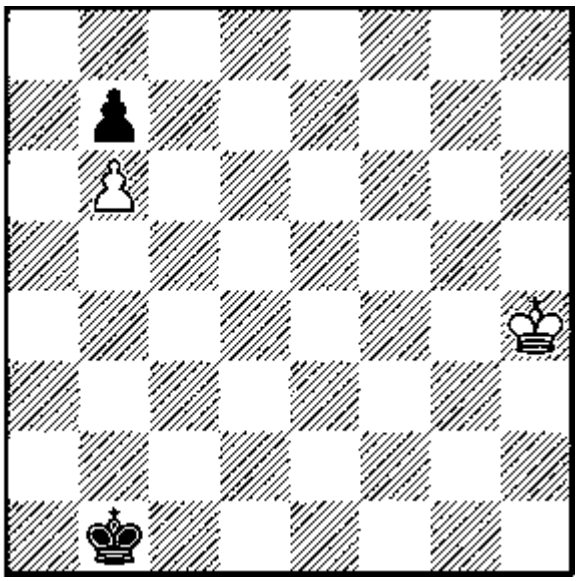
Shirov decided instead to pick up the rook for his h-pawn, but he misjudged the pawn ending.

1…Kg2?? 2 K×f4 h1Q 3 R×h1 K×h1 4 Kg3!

Black resigned. His king is squeezed into the corner, giving White time to push his f3-pawn forward, after which he can win Black's pawn. For example: 4…Kg1 5 f4 Kf1 6 f5! (but not 6 Kf3? f5!=) 6…Ke2 7 Kf4 Kd3 8 Ke5 Ke3 9 f6!+–

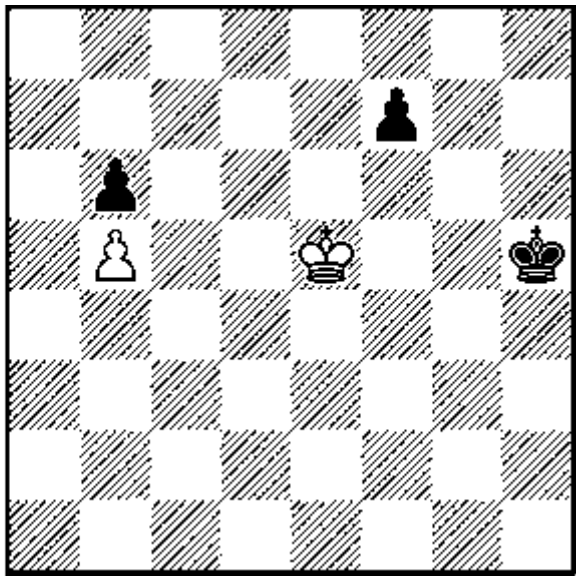
Exercises

1-98



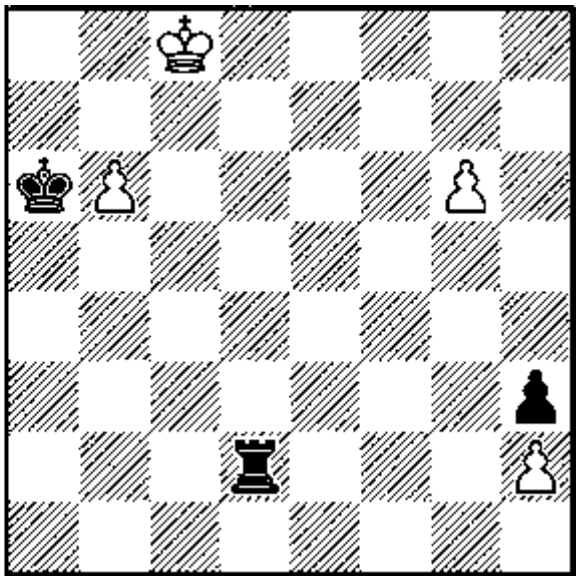
1/34
W?

1-99



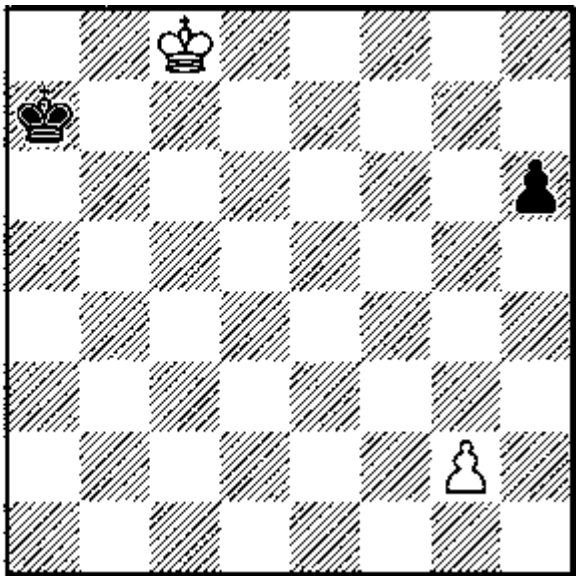
1/35
W?

1-100



1/36
W?/Play

1-101



1/37
W?/Play

Breakthrough

A breakthrough occurs when one or more pawns are sacrificed in order to create a passed pawn and promote it.

Let's examine a few of the standard structures in which a pawn breakthrough is possible.

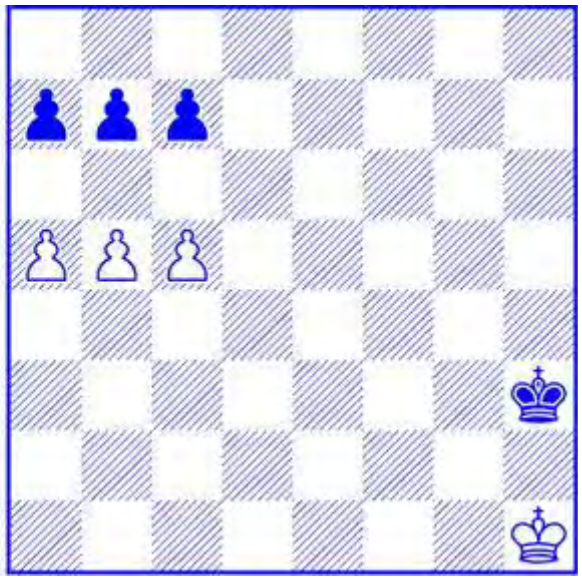
White to move wins by **1 b6! cb** (1…ab 2 c6) **2 a6! ba 3 c6**

Black to move has only one way to parry the threatened breakthrough: by **1…b6!** (both 1…a6?

2 c6! and 1…c6? 2 a6! are bad).

Let's add one more white pawn at c4. Now the move 1…b6 no longer works, because of 2 cb cb 3 c5.

1-102



Now let's move the a-pawn to a4. In this case, Black can stop the breakthrough for good by playing 1…c6! 2 a5 a6!

1-103

This is the sort of structure we find in the Ruy Lopez Exchange Variation. Black to move can create a passed pawn by 1…c4! 2 Kg3 c5, followed by …b5-b4, …a5-a4 and …b4-b3. (Strictly speaking, the term "breakthrough" is not really appropriate here, since no pawn sacrifice is involved; but the effect is just the same.)

White to move can stabilize the situation on the queenside by **1 c4!**, which guarantees him a decisive advantage, thanks to the outside passed pawn he will create on the opposite side of the board.

Maslov – Glebov
USSR 1936

1-104

B?

Black's position looks difficult, since the enemy king rules the queenside. But the possibility of a pawn breakthrough changes the evaluation of the position completely.

1…h5! 2 Ka3 (2 g4 g5!) **2…g5 3 K×a4 f5! 4 Kb5**

There is no defense: 4 hg f4!, or 4 ef g4! 5 fg e4.

4…f4 5 gf gh, and the h-pawn queens.

The errors committed in the following examples are quite instructive. They could have been put in the "Tragicomedies" section, except that I already had plenty of material for that section without them.

Havasi – Peko
Budapest 1976

1-105

B?

Black resigned, never suspecting that the queenside pawn structure contained the possibility of a breakthrough.

1…c4! 2 bc

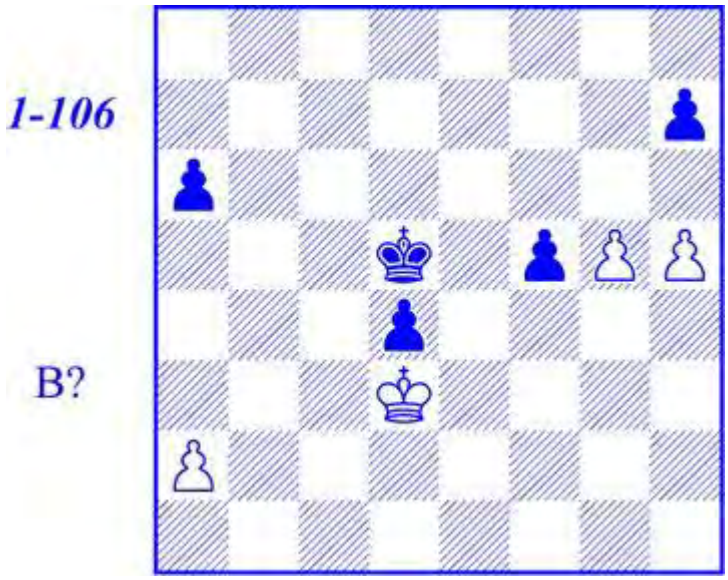
If 2 dc, then 2…a4 3 ba b3 4 cb d3–+, while 2 Kg3 is met by 2…a4! 3 ba b3 4 cb c3.

2…a4 3 c5 a3 4 ba ba 5 c6 a2 6 c7 a1Q 7 c8Q

The pawns queen simultaneously; but Black has an easy win by once again obtaining a pawn ending. Note Black's working the queen up to h4 – a standard technique in these positions, ensuring that the g4-pawn is captured with check.

7…Qf1+ 8 Kg3 Qf4+ 9 Kh3 Qf3+ 10 Kh2 Qf2+! 11 Kh3 Qh4+ 12 Kg2 Q×g4+ 13 Q×g4 K×g4 14 Kf2 K×h5–+.

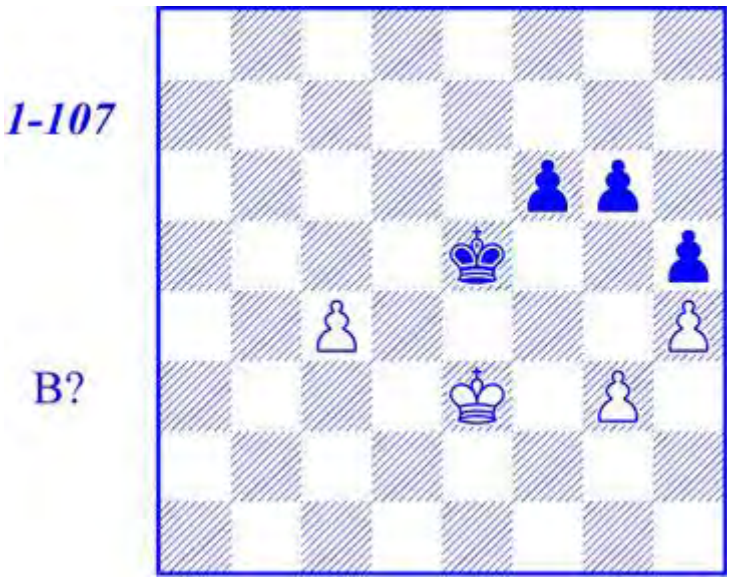
Capablanca – Ed. Lasker
London simul 1913



1…Ke5?? 2 h6! (△ 3 g6) Black resigned.

The draw would have been assured after 1…Ke6! 2 K×d4 f4 3 Ke4 f3 4 K×f3 Kf5 5 g6 hg 6 h6 Kf6=.

Kharlov – Ernst
Haninge 1992



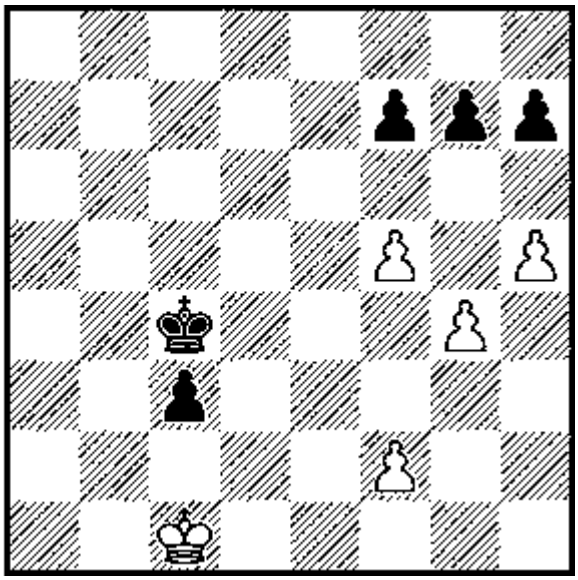
The position is drawn: 1…Kd6! 2 Kd4 Kc6 3 c5 g5 4 Ke4 gh 5 gh K×c5 6 Kf5 Kd6=.

In the game, Black played **1…g5?? 2 g4!+–**, and after a few more unnecessary moves (2…hg 3 h5 f5 4 h6 f4+ 5 Kf2 g3+ 6 Kg2 Ke4 7 h7), he resigned.

Tragicomedies

Ed. Lasker – Moll
Berlin 1904

1-108



B

Black wins easily by 1…f6 2 g5 (2 h6 gh 3 f4 Kd5) 2…h6; 1…Kd4 is also good.

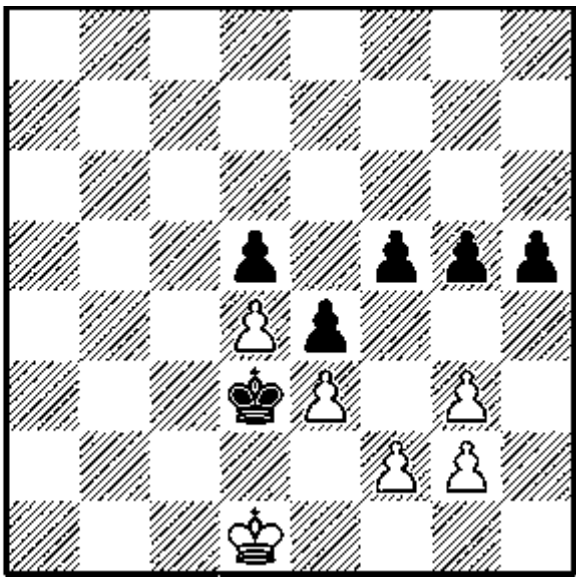
1…h6??

A terrible blunder, allowing the breakthrough 2 f6! gf 3 f4 Kd5 4 g5 fg 5 fg Ke6 6 gh Kf6 7 Kc2 ⊙+–.

But White failed to exploit his unexpected opportunity and lost after **2 f4?? f6! 3 g5 Kd4.**

Svacina – Müller
Vienna 1941

1-109



B

Black cannot capitalize on the active position of his king: 1…g4 2 Ke1 Kc2 3 Ke2=; or 1…f4 2 gf gf 3 ef=. He thought up an amusing psychological trap: retreating his king instead.

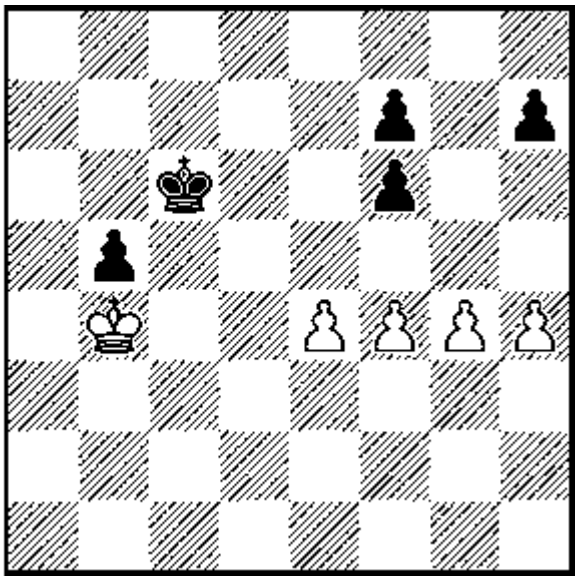
1…Kc4 2 Kc2 Kb5 3 Kb3 Kc6 4 Kb4 Kd6 5 Kb5 Kd7 6 Kc5 Ke6 7 Kc6?

And it worked! White, having no idea what his opponent was up to, naively marched his king deep into enemy territory – no doubt, he was already expecting to win. But now, Black plays the pawn breakthrough.

7…g4! 8 Kc5 f4! 9 ef h4! 10 gh g3 11 fg e3 White resigned.

Nakagawa – Day
Buenos Aires ol 1978

1-110



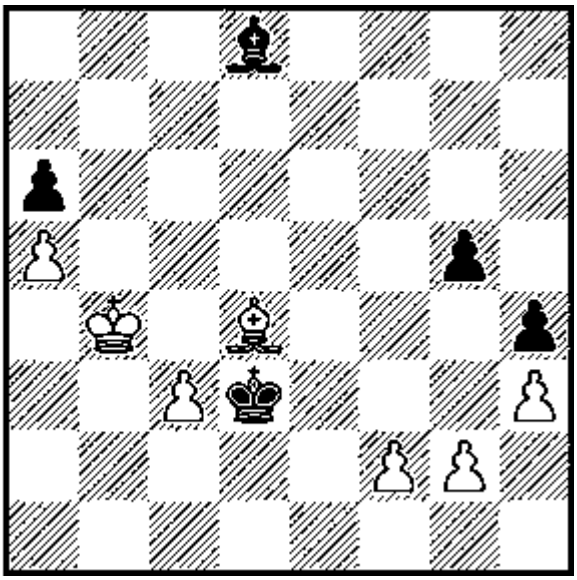
B

This position is drawn: the potential threat of a kingside breakthrough is counterbalanced by Black's outside passed pawn – but no more than that. Here is how matters should normally develop: 1…Kb6 2 h5 Kc6 3 h6! Kb6 4 e5 (4 f5 Kc6 5 e5 Kd5! 6 K×b5! K×e5 7 Kc6=) 4…fe 5 fe (5 f5 e4 6 Kc3! Kc5 7 g5 is also possible.) 5…Kc6 6 e6! Kd6 (6…fe? 7 g5+–) 7 ef Ke7 8 K×b5 K×f7 9 Kc4=.

But the game continued **1…h6??**, and now White could have won easily by 2 h5! (△ 3 g5). Instead, he chose **2 g5??**, which lost after **2…fg 3 fg h5! 4 e5 Kd5**, etc.

Süss – Haakert
BRD ch, Kiel 1967

1-111



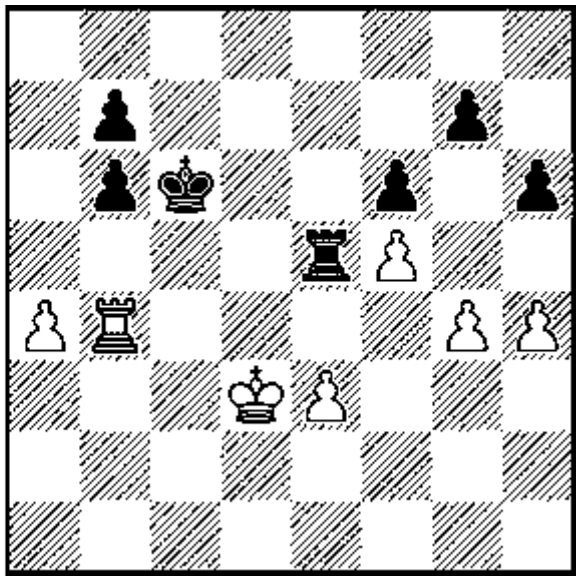
W

1 g4!? or 1 Bb6!? would have retained excellent winning chances for White. However, he forgot about the possibility of a pawn breakthrough, and obtained the opposite result instead.

1 g3?? g4! 2 gh gh 3 Be5 B×h4 4 f3 Bf6! 5 Bh2 B×c3+ 6 Ka4 Ke3 7 f4 Ke4 White resigned.

Averbakh – Bebchuk
Moscow 1964

1-112



B?

Black has an inferior, but defensible endgame. Bebchuk, however, misjudged the pawn ending.

1…b5? 2 R×b5! R×b5 3 ab+ K×b5 4 e4 Kc6 5 e5! fe

If 5…Kd5 6 e6 Kd6, White brings his king to b6 (or, if Black plays …b7-b6, to b5), and after Black replies …Kc8, uses his reserve tempo h4-h5 to win.

6 g5 hg

Black finds no relief in 6…Kd6 7 f6 Ke6 8 fg Kf7 9 gh b5 (the floating square for Black's pawns does not reach the last rank, and the distance between the pawns is the unfavorable two files) 10 Ke4 b4 11 Kd3 and 12 Kc4+–.

7 f6!

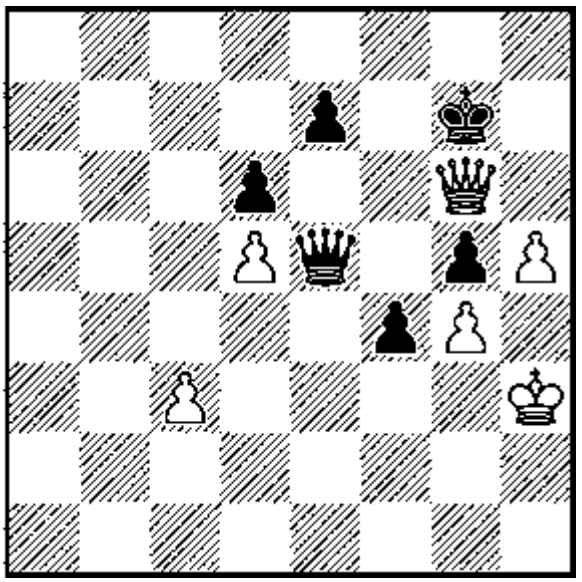
Not, however, 7 h5? Kd6 8 f6 Ke6 9 fg Kf7–+. Black resigned, in view of 7…gf 8 h5.

Black had a better defense in 1…h5!?, when White could have tried 2 Rb5!. Here, too, the exchange of rooks leads to a loss: 2…R×b5? 3 ab+ K×b5 4 e4! Kc6 (4…hg 5 e5) 5 e5 Kd7□ 6 e6+ Kd6 7 gh b5 8 Kc3 b6 (8…Kc7 9 Kb4 Kc6 10 Ka5) 9 Kb4 Kc6 10 h6! gh 11 h5⊙ Kd6 12 K×b5 Kc7 13 e7+–. Black would have to play 2…Re8! 3 gh Rh8, with good drawing chances.

Gazik – Pétursson

Groningen ech jr 1978/79

1-113



B?

After 1…Kh8! the draw is obvious. In the game, however, Black allowed the trade of queens.

1…Kf8?? 2 Qf5+! Q×f5 3 gf Kg7 4 c4

A simpler way is 4 Kg4 Kh6 (4…Kf6 5 h6 +–) 5 c4 f3 (5…Kg7 6 Kf3⊙) 6 K×f3 K×h5 7 f6 (7 Kg3 is good, too) 7…Kg6 (7…ef 8 c5 +–) 8 fe Kf7 9 Kg4 K×e7 10 K×g5 +–.

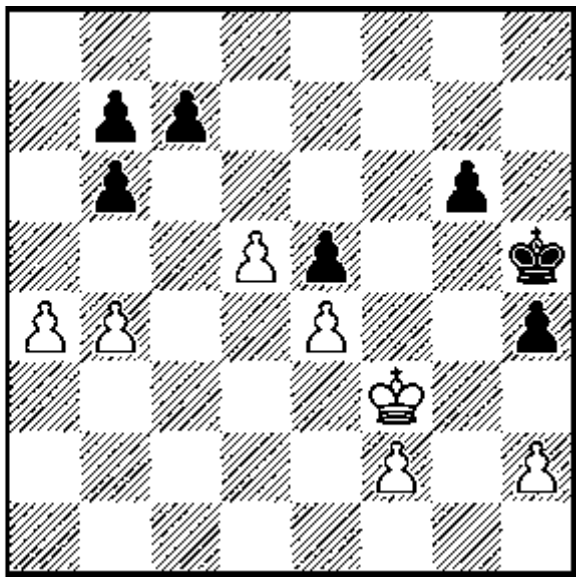
4…f3 5 h6+??

White returns the favor by being in too much of a hurry for the breakthrough. The win was 5 Kg3 g4 6 Kf2!⊙ Kh6 (6…Kf6 7 h6) 7 c5 (or 7 f6 ef 8 c5) 7…dc 8 f6 ef 9 d6.

5…K×h6 6 c5 dc 7 f6 Kg6! White resigned.

Wade – Korchnoi
Buenos Aires 1960

1-114



B?

Korchnoi ignored the possible pawn breakthrough on the queenside.

1…Kg5?? 2 b5! Kh5 3 a5!

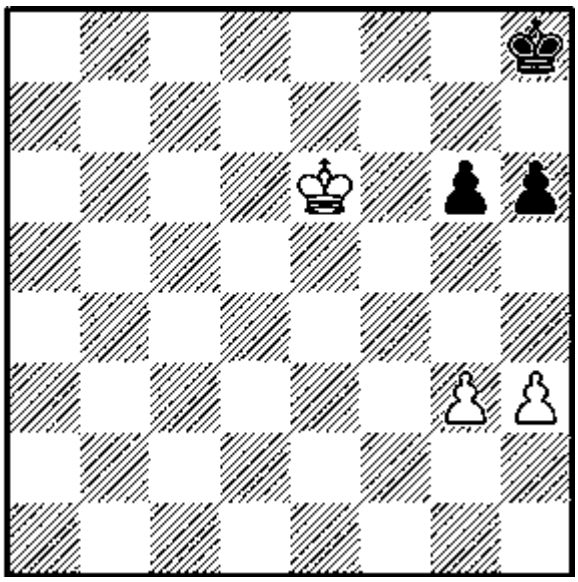
Black resigned, in view of 3…ba 4 b6 cb 5 d6.

He would also have lost after 1…g5? 2 b5 g4+ 3 Ke2 (3 Ke3 Kg5 4 f3 g3 5 hg hg 6 Ke2! is also possible) 3…Kg5 (3…h3 4 a5!) 4 f3 or 4 h3. Black's king would be tied to the kingside, while White could break through on the queenside at the right moment.

The only way to ward off White's threat was by 1…b5! 2 ab b6, and we have a draw: 3 Ke3 (3 h3 g5 4 Kg2 g4?! 5 f4! g3!= is also good) 3…g5! (3…Kg5? 4 f4+! ef+ 5 Kf3+–; or 3…Kg4? 4 f3+ Kh3 5 f4 ef+ 6 K×f4 K×h2 7 e5+–) 4 h3 (4 f3 is weaker due to 4…g4 5 f4 h3!) 4…g4 5 f4! gh 6 Kf3 ef 7 e5, etc.

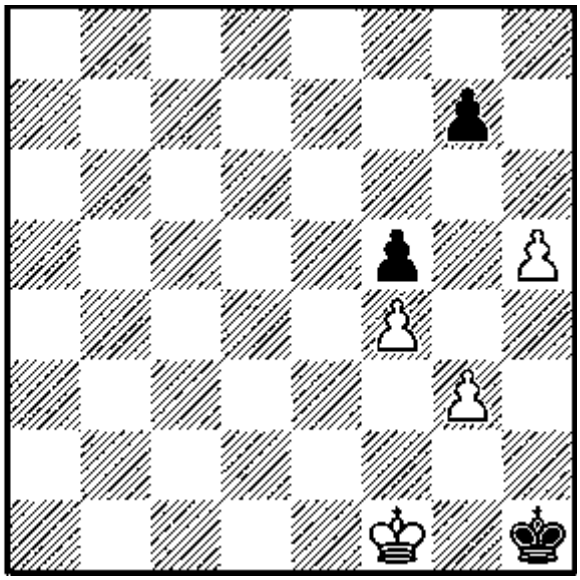
Exercises

1-115



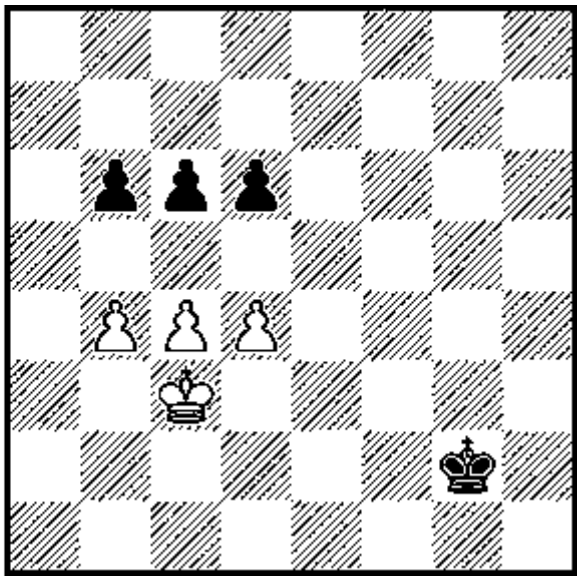
1/38
W?

1-116



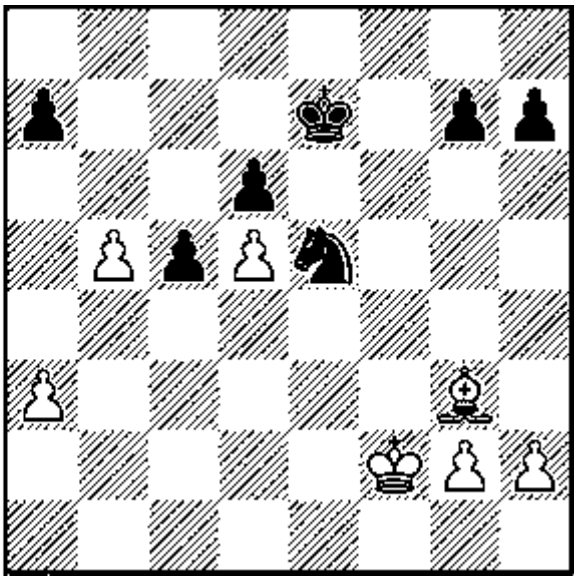
1/39
W?

1-117



1/40
W?

1-118



1/41
W?

The Outside Passed Pawn

An outside passed pawn usually means a positional advantage sufficient to win. This pawn will draw off the enemy king, allowing the other king to be the first to attack the enemy pawns.

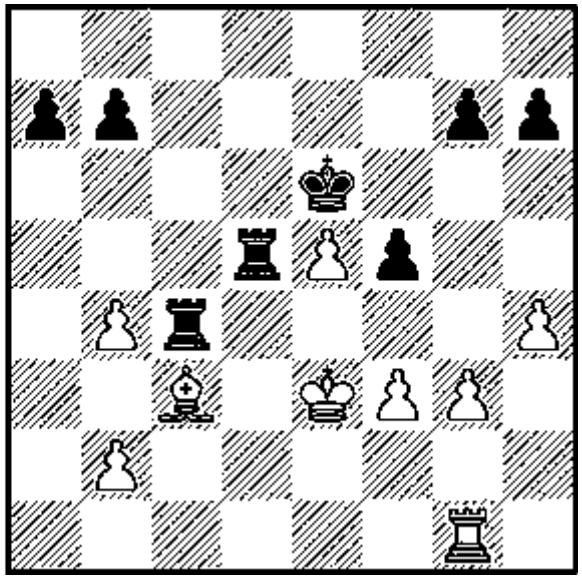
For example, in Diagram 1-103, after 1 c4!, stopping the threatened enemy breakthrough, we broke off our analysis, since the further exploitation of the outside passed pawn is elementary here.

Of course, that is not always the case. In the endgames Kharlov-Ernst (Diagram 1-107) or Nakagawa-Day (Diagram 1-110), the proper outcome would have been a draw, despite the

presence of an outside passed pawn. And in the game Hansen-Nimzovitch (Diagram 1-83), Black met the threat of an outside passed pawn with the activation of his king, which even won for him.

Lombardy – Fischer
USA ch, New York 1960-61

1-119



W

The game hangs in the balance after 1 Ra1, despite Black's material advantage – it is not so easy to find a way to break through the enemy defenses. However, Lombardy committed "harakiri": he allowed Fischer to obtain an easily won pawn ending, based on an outside passed pawn.

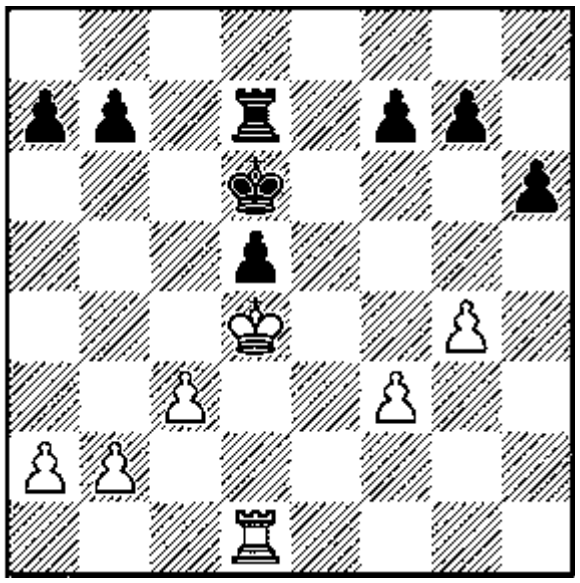
1 Re1?? R×c3+! 2 bc R×e5+ 3 Kd2 R×e1 4 K×e1 Kd5 5 Kd2 Kc4 6 h5 b6

Black gets an outside passed a-pawn by force, which draws the white king to the edge of the board.

7 Kc2 g5 8 h6 f4 9 g4 a5 10 ba ba 11 Kb2 a4 12 Ka3 K×c3 13 K×a4 Kd4 14 Kb4 Ke3 White resigned.

Martynov – Ulybin
Daugavpils 1986

1-120



W?

White had to play 1 Rh1!, intending 2 Rh5. After 1…Kc6! (neither 1…Rc7 2 b3, nor 1…Re7 2 Rh5 Re2 3 R×d5+ Kc6 4 Ra5= is dangerous) 2 Rh5 Rd6 3 f4!?t, White's more active king and (even more importantly) rook position assure him good compensation for the pawn minus.

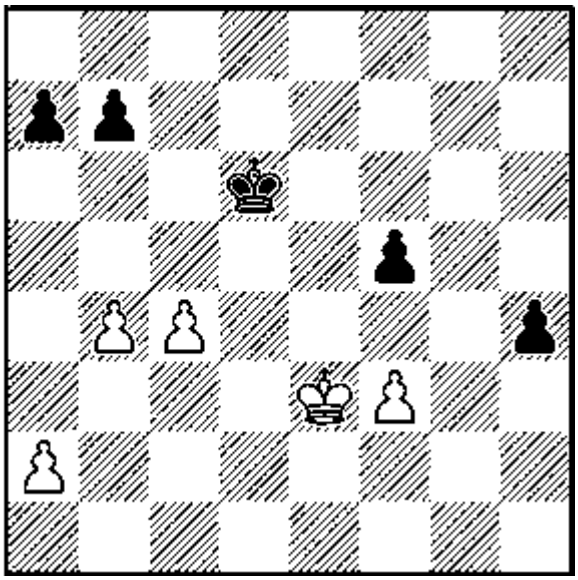
In the game, he played **1 Re1?**, misjudging the force of the reply **1…Re7!**

Ulybin allowed his opponent to reestablish material equality, because he knew that he would have a decisive positional advantage in the pawn endgame, thanks to his unstoppable threat to

create an outside passed pawn.

2 R×e7 K×e7 3 K×d5 g6! 4 c4 h5 5 gh gh 6 Ke5 h4 7 Kf4 f5 8 b4 Kd6 9 Ke3

1-121



B?

9…a5! 10 a3 ab 11 ab h3! 12 Kf2 Ke5 13 Kg3 Kd4

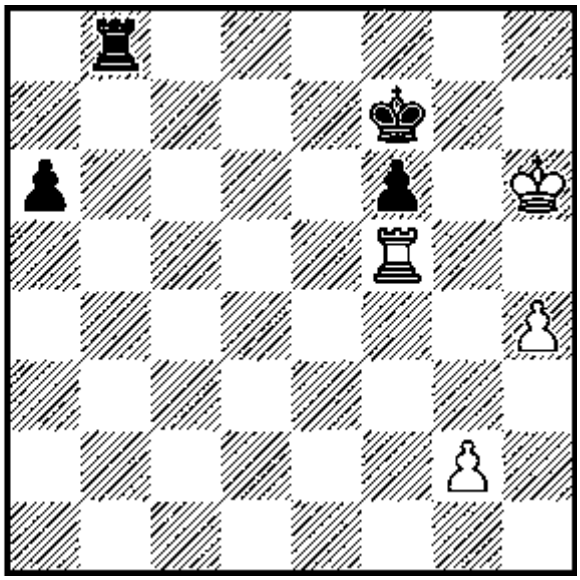
Here we see why Black exchanged a pair of pawns with 9…a5! In this way, he wins the queenside pawns quicker, and can queen his b-pawn before White gets anything going on the kingside.

14 K×h3 K×c4 15 Kg3 K×b4 16 Kf4 Kc4 17 K×f5 b5 18 f4 b4 19 Ke6 b3 White resigned.

Tragicomedies

Nimzovitch – Tarrasch
San Sebastian 1911

1-122



W?

The actual move made, **1 Kh5?**, lost: **1…Rb5! 2 Kg4 R×f5 3 K×f5 a5 4 Ke4**

The outside passed pawn draws the white king to the queenside – but Nimzovitch probably hoped that his pawns would be able to defend themselves, as in the variation 4…a4? 5 Kd3 f5 6 g3! However, Tarrasch does not allow his opponent to connect his pawns.

4…f5+!

White resigned, since after 5 Kd4 (5 K×f5 a4) 5…f4! 6 Kc4 Kg6, his pawns are lost.

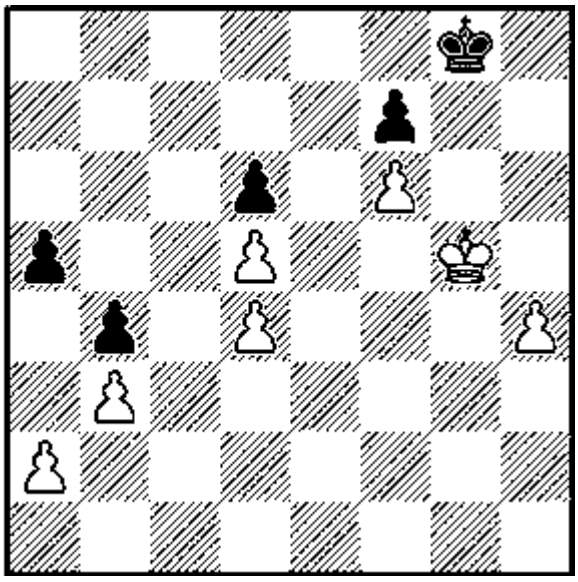
White had a draw with 1 Kh7! Rb5 2 R×b5! (I suggest the reader establish for himself that White loses after 2 g4? R×f5 3 gf a5 4 h5 a4 5 h6 a3 6 Kh8 a2 7 h7 Ke7!) 2…ab 3 g4 b4 4 g5=.

Brüggemann – Darius

Botzov 1969

1-123

W



A draw was agreed here, but White can win.

1 Kf5 Kh7 2 Ke4 Kg6 3 Kd3 K×f6

If Black does not take the pawn at once, White's king will capture Black's queenside, and still have enough time to get back to the kingside: 3…Kf5 4 Kc4 K×f6 5 Kb5 Kg6 (or 5…Kf5 6 K×a5 Kg4 7 K×b4 f5 8 a4 f4 9 a5, with a winning queen endgame) 6 K×a5 f5 7 K×b4 f4 (7…Kh5 8 a4 f4 9 a5+–) 8 Kc3 Kh5 9 Kd3 K×h4 10 Ke2 Kg3 11 Kf1+–.

4 Ke4!

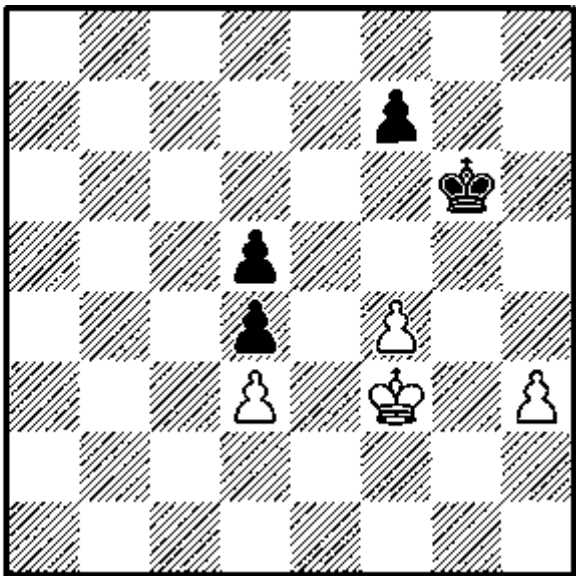
There is not time to go after the queenside anymore; however, the situation on the kingside is now a simple win because of the outside passed pawn.

4…Kg6 5 Kf4+– (after 5…Kh5, both 6 Kg3 and 6 Kf5 are good).

Exercises

1-124

1/42
W?



Two Rook's Pawns with an Extra Pawn on the Opposite Wing

Positions in which two rook's pawns are facing each other, with one side having a distant passed pawn, are fairly common in practice, so it is useful to have a quick and accurate way of evaluating them. The plan to play for a win is obvious: the king will go after the rook's pawn. His opponent, meanwhile, must eliminate the pawn on the other wing, and then rush the king over to the corner where it can stop the rook's pawn. Under what circumstances can he succeed?

1-125

White to move wins: **1 a5! Kg7 2 Kf4 Kf6 3 Ke4 Kf7 4 Kd5 Kf6 6 Kc6 K×f5 6 Kb6 Ke6 7 K×a6 Kd7 8 Kb7**

If it is Black to move, after **1…a5!**, the position is drawn, as you may easily determine: Black's king has enough time to get to c8.

But let's say that we move the kings and the f-pawn one rank down, or one file to the left; then, once again, Black loses. But what if we also move the queenside pawns one rank down?

Of course, with the position right in front of us, any question is easily answered. But in practice, such situations often occur at the end of long calculations, and extending such calculations a few moves further still could be most difficult. It would be good to have a definite evaluation of this position immediately, as soon as we lay eyes on it.

Bähr demonstrated such a means of quick appraisal in 1936. I did not find his rule very convenient for us; in addition, it was not designed to work when the king would be, not to one side, but ahead of the pawn. So therefore I offer a somewhat different method of quickly evaluating this sort of position.

(1) The first rule is similar to Bähr's rule: ***If the rook's pawn of the stronger side has crossed the middle of the board, it is always a win.***

(2) We shall designate a "normal" position, in which:

(a) the rook's pawns, which block one another, are separated by the middle of the board; and

(b) Black's king, aiming for the c8-square, can reach it without loss of time. This is because the passed pawn has either traversed the key diagonal h3-c8, or stands upon it.

The "normal" position is drawn.

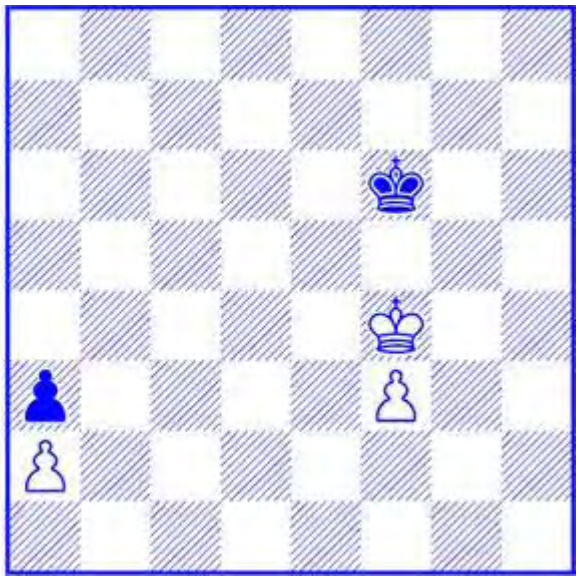
(3) For the kingside passed pawn, every square behind the h3-c8 diagonal is an extra tempo for White. For example: the pawn at f4 means one extra tempo; the pawn at e4 – two. And if the king is not beside the passed pawn, but in front of it, that is another extra tempo.

And every square the queenside pawns are behind the "normal" position is an extra tempo for the defending side. With pawns at a3/a4, Black has an extra tempo in his favor; with pawns at a2/a3 – two.

White wins only if the relative number of tempi calculated by the means shown above is in his favor.

The formulation may seem a bit ungainly, but once memorized, it is quite easy to apply. For example:

1-126



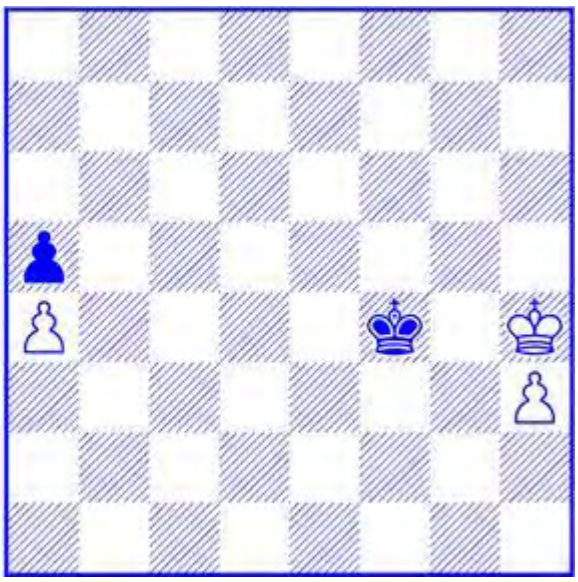
White of course is on move (if it were Black to move, the f-pawn would queen). White wins, because the count is 3:2 in his favor. Black has two tempi, because the queenside pawns are two squares behind the "normal" position. White's f3-pawn is two squares lower than the h3-c8 diagonal (the f5-square), and his king, being in front of the pawn, gives him three tempi.

1 Ke4! Ke6 2 Kd4(d3)+–

1 Ke3? Ke5(f5)= would be a terrible blunder, because then we would have a position where the tempi are 2:2 (White's king is no longer in front of the f-pawn, but next to it) – which makes it a draw.

One more useful addendum to the rule. Let's suppose that White's passed pawn is a rook's pawn, with the king in front of it, but the enemy king is boxing his opposite number in on the rook file. ***This situation is the same as the one in which the king is next to his pawn.***

1-127

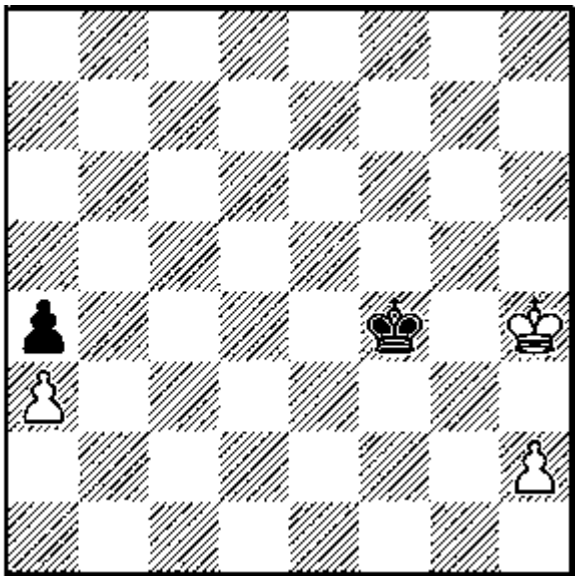


B

According to the rule formulated above, this is a draw. And in fact, after **1…Kf5 2 Kh5** (2 Kg3 Kg5 is the "normal" position), Black does not play 2…Kf6? 3 Kg4, when White has an extra tempo, because his king is in front of his pawn, but **2…Kf4! 3 h4** (3 Kg6 Kg3) **3…Kf5 4 Kh6 Kf6 5 Kh7 Kf7(f5) 6 h5 Kf6!**, etc.

It must be noted here that this last rule is inoperative with the pawn on its starting square.

1-128



Black has one tempo (since the queenside pawns are one rank back), but if it is his move, he still loses. The problem lies in the fact that the standard 1…Kf3 is impossible in view of 2 Kg5 Kg2 3 h4, while after 1…Kf5 2 Kg3 Kg5, White has not one, but two tempi (the pawn is below the c8-h3 diagonal, and the king is in front of the pawn).

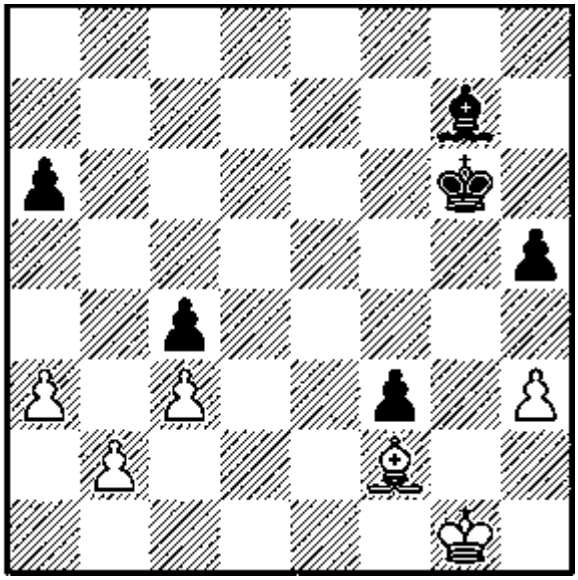
With White to move, the position is drawn, even if the queenside pawns are placed as in the "normal" position, because the h-pawn will have to go to h3: 1 Kh5 Kf5 2 h3 (2 Kh6 Kg4=) 2…Kf4!=.

Let's look at some more complex examples, in which understanding my proposed rule considerably simplifies the calculation of variations.

Privorotsky – Petersons
Riga 1967

1-129

W?



Black has an obvious positional plus. His plan is clear: …Kg6-f5-e4, and then attack the queenside pawns with either bishop or king. This plan can be forestalled by offering a trade of bishops, but this requires accurate calculation.

1 Bd4! B×d4+ (1…Bh6 2 Kf2 Bc1 3 K×f3 B×b2 4 a4=) **2 cd Kf5 3 Kf2 Ke4 4 d5!** (otherwise 4…K×d4 5 K×f3 Kd3) **4…K×d5 5 K×f3 Kd4 6 Ke2 c3**

On 6…h4 7 Kd2 a5, White plays either 8 Kc2 or 8 a4.

7 bc+ K×c3 8 h4!!

Right! Otherwise, Black would play 8…h4! himself, and after picking up the a3-pawn, he wins, because his pawn on the opposite wing has crossed the center of the board. After the text, we have

the "normal" – that is, the drawn – position.

8…Kb3 9 Kd3 K×a3 10 Kc3 a5 11 Kc4! Ka4 12 Kc3 Kb5 13 Kb3 Draw.

The calculation of this endgame resulted in positions we have examined in one form or another. If White had not been able to appraise them "mechanically," using the rule shown above, but had had to extend the variations to the end, he would have had to take each of his calculations a dozen moves further – certainly not a simple process.

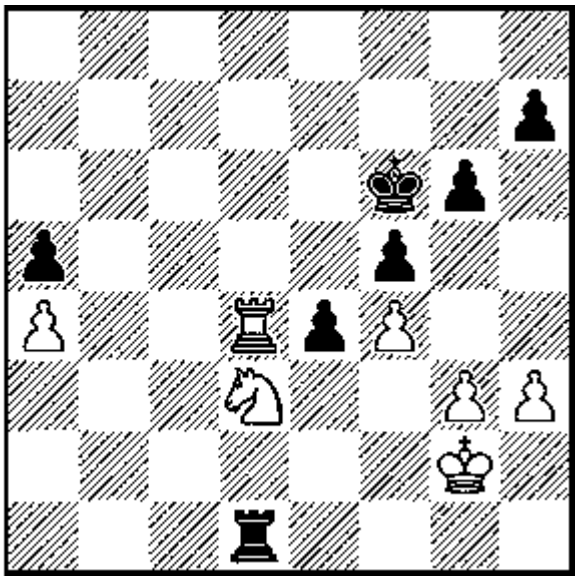
The following endgame created even more complex problems for both sides.

Matanovic – Botvinnik

Belgrade 1969

1-130

W?



In his notes, Botvinnik analyzed two approaches for White: 1 Rd5, and 1 Rd6+ Ke7 2 Ra6. In fact, he had a third try: 1 Kf2! For example, 1…ed 2 Ke3 Ra1 (2…Rg1 3 Kf2) 3 R×d3 R×a4 4 Rd6+ followed by 5 Ra6, when White must draw.

But suppose we forget about this possibility, and try to choose the more exact of the two possible rook moves.

First, we must try some short variations, in order to establish the differences between them, to compare their advantages and their shortcomings.

On 1 Rd6+ Ke7 2 Ra6, a clear draw follows 2…R×d3 3 R×a5, or 2…Rd2+ 3 Nf2 e3 4 Kf3! (4 R×a5 R×f2+ 5 Kg1 is also possible) 4…e2 (4…ef 5 Kg2) 5 Ra7+. However, the pawn capture on d3 is unpleasant: 2…ed! 3 R×a5 Kd6. Now, 4 Kf2? is bad, in view of 4…Rg1!; so White must continue 4 Ra8, allowing the black king to get closer to his passed d-pawn. Is this rook ending lost or drawn? It is hard to say – which means that it is time to break off the calculation here, and look at the alternative.

1 Rd5! Rd2+!

Now this rook endgame, after 1…ed 2 R×a5, is harmless for White: 2…d2 3 Rd5, or 2…Ke6 3 Re5+ Kd6 4 Kf2 d2 (4…Rg1 5 Re3) 5 Ke2 Rg1 6 K×d2 R×g3 7 Re3. But, thanks to the pin of the knight on the d-file, Black has an in-between rook check, securing him a transition into a favorable pawn endgame.

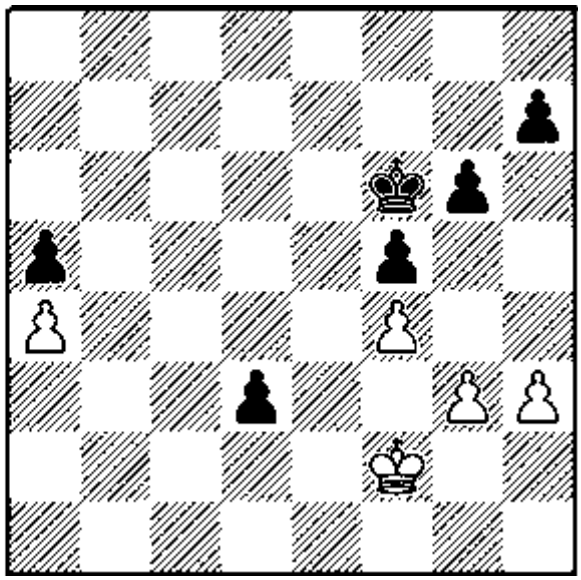
2 Kf1 R×d3 3 R×d3

A forced exchange – otherwise, the g3-pawn is lost.

3…ed 4 Kf2

1-131

B



Unfortunately, here too it is not clear whether White can be saved. Nonetheless, pawn endings are generally of a more forcing nature than rook endings are. Here, as a rule, it is possible to obtain an accurate appraisal of the position, if you can take a variation to its conclusion. So it makes sense to concentrate our efforts on the calculation of this pawn endgame.

Black has two plans of action: bringing the king to the center, in the hope of putting his opponent in zugzwang, and the kingside break with g6-g5.

We can easily establish that the first plan is harmless: 4…Ke6 5 Ke3 Kd6 (5…Kd5 6 K×d3 h6 7 g4) 6 K×d3 Kd5 7 g4 h6 (on 7…fg 8 hg h5, there is 9 f5!, although 9 gh gh 10 Ke3 also does not lose) 8 g5! hg (8…h5 9 h4) 9 fg f4 10 h4 Ke5 11 Ke2, with equality.

4…g5! 4 fg+!

5 Ke3? would be a mistake: 5…gf+ 6 gf Ke6 7 h4 Kd5 8 K×d3 h5⊙.

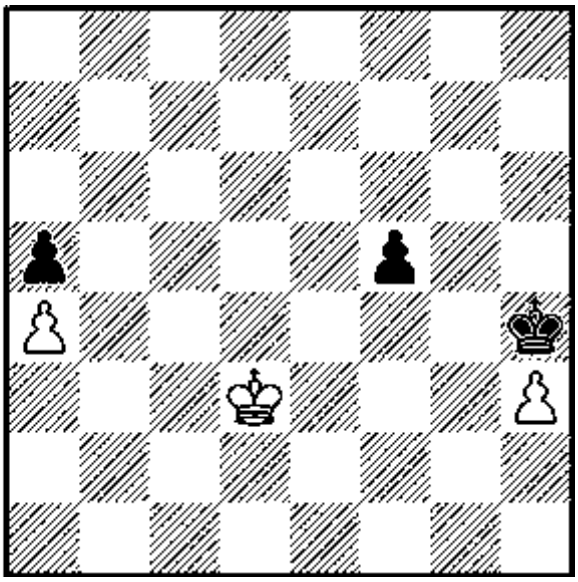
5…K×g5 6 Ke3 h5 7 K×d3 h4

We have already seen the situation occurring after 7…f4 8 gf+ K×f4 in the previous example. White's king cannot attack the a-pawn – but this is not necessary: it is enough to squeeze the enemy king onto the h-file. For example: 9 h4 (or 9 Kd4) 9…Kg4 10 Ke4 K×h4 11 Kf4, with a draw.

8 gh+ K×h4

1-132

W?



Which of the two natural moves – 9 Ke3 or 9 Ke2 – should White make? Let's go back to the rule laid down above. After Black wins the h-pawn, our "arithmetic" shows that he will have one tempo, since the f-pawn is one square above the crucial c1-h6 diagonal. White can only save himself if he can force that pawn forward to f4.

So clearly, 9 Ke2? loses: 9…Kg3⊙ 10 h4 (10 Kf1 K×h3 11 Kf2 Kg4, and Black now has two

tempi) 10…K×h4 11 Kf3 Kg5 12 Kg3 Kf6 13 Kf4 Ke6 14 Kf3 Kd5, etc.

9 Ke3! Kg3 10 Ke2

Now it is Black who is in zugzwang: he must advance his pawn to f4, since 10…Kg2 11 Ke3 Kg3 12 Ke2 is a useless "pendulum."

10…f4 11 Kf1 K×h3 12 Kf2 Kg4 13 Kg2

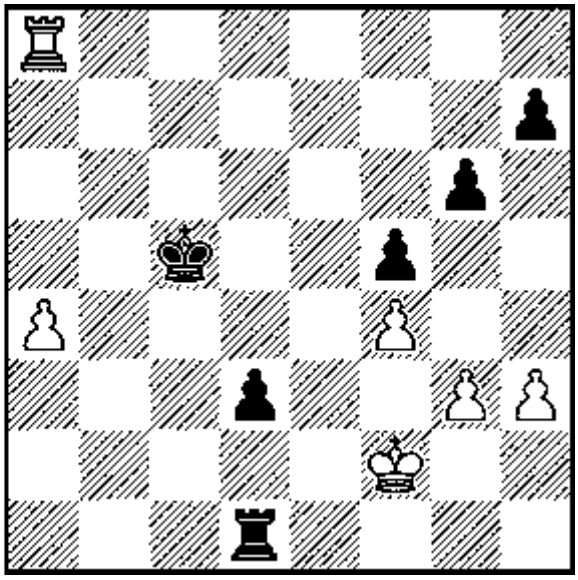
And we have the "normal" drawn position.

Matanovic was unable to calculate the pawn ending accurately, and so preferred to keep rooks on. Unfortunately for him, the rook ending turned out to be lost.

Let's return to Diagram 1-130.

1 Rd6+? Ke7 2 Ra6 ed! 3 R×a5 Kd6 4 Ra8 Kc7 (Black repeats moves to gain time to think) **5 Ra5 Kc6 6 Ra8 Kc5 7 Kf2**

1-133



B?

7…Ra1?

7…Kd4! 8 a5 Ra1 would have won. For example: 9 a6 (9 Rd8+ Kc3 10 Rc8+ Kd2 would lead to approximately the same situation as in the game) 9…d2 10 a7 d1N+! (the only way; now wherever the king retreats, it will be checked by the knight, allowing it to get to d5) 11 Kf3 Ra3+ 12 Kg2 (12 Ke2 Nc3+) 12…Ne3+ 13 Kf2 Ra2+ 14 Kf3 Nd5 15 g4 Nc7–+. After the text, White manages to save himself by sacrificing several pawns: 8 Ke3! Rg1 9 g4! fg 10 hg Rg3+ (10…R×g4 11 Rd8!?) 11 Kd2 R×g4 12 f5! gf 13 K×d3=.

8 Rd8? Kc4 9 Ke3 Re1+ (9…Rg1? 10 Rd4+) **10 Kf2 Re2+ 11 Kf3 Re6! 12 a5 Kc3 13 Rc8+ Kd2! 14 h4**

According to Botvinnik's analysis, 14 Rc7 would not have saved White either: 14…h5 (14…Re1? 15 a6 Ra1 16 a7) 15 Kf2 Kd1 16 Kf3 d2 17 Kf2 Re2+! 18 Kf1 Re3 19 a6 (19 Kf2 Ra3, followed by …Ra1-c1) 19…R×g3 20 a7 Ra3 21 Kf2 h4 22 Kf1 Ra4 23 Kg2 Ke2 24 Re7+ Kd3 25 Rd7+ Ke3.

14…Re1! 15 a6 Ra1

Now on 16 Rc6 Ke1 is decisive: 17 Re6+ Kf1 18 Rd6 (18 Ke3 Re1+) 18…d2 19 R×d2 Ra3+, and White gets mated! The same thing happens after 16 Ra8 Ke1 17 a7 d2 18 Re8+ Kf1 19 Rd8 Ra3+.

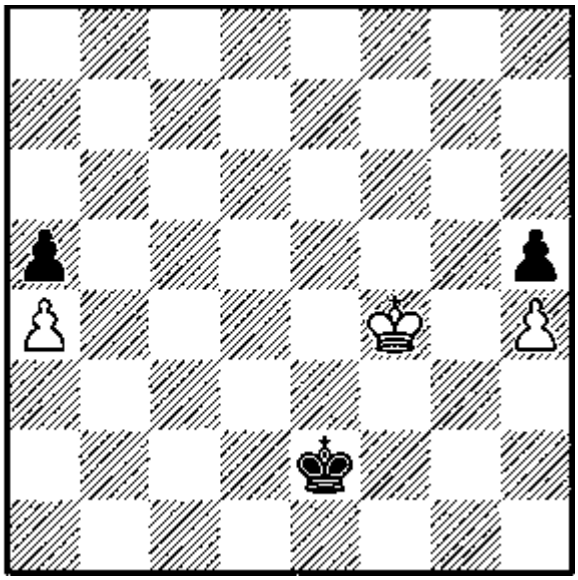
16 Rc7 Ke1 17 Kg2 R×a6 18 Re7+ Kd1 19 R×h7 Ra2+ 20 Kf1 d2 21 Rc7 Ra1 22 Kf2 Rc1 White resigned.

Tragicomedies

Colle – Grünfeld
Karlsbad 1929

1-134

B



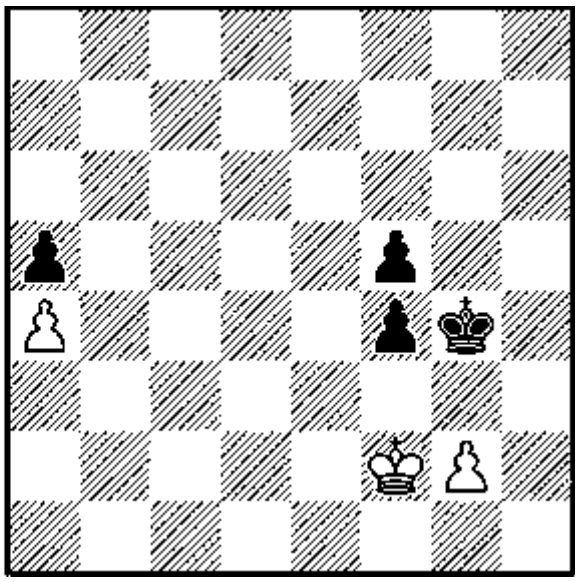
Grünfeld resigned, not realizing that, by squeezing the white king onto the h-file, he had an easy draw.

1…Kd3! 2 Kg5 Ke4 3 K×h5 Kf5=, etc.

Winants – L. Hansen
Wijk aan Zee 1994

1-135

B



The position is drawn. Black tries one last chance:

1…f3!? 2 gf+??

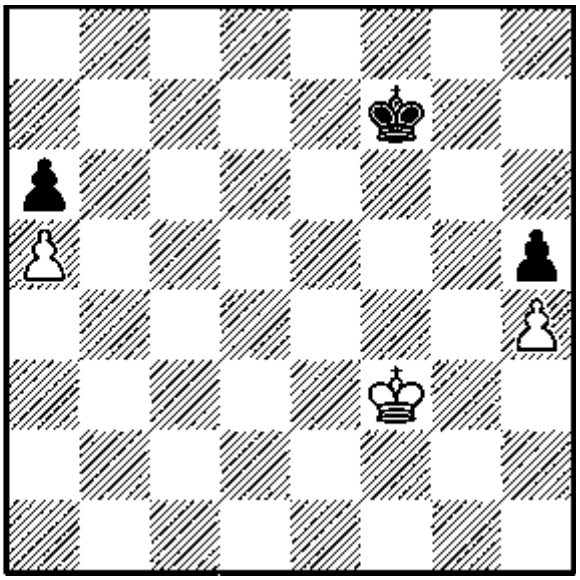
The correct 2 g3! f4 3 gf K×f4 leads to the "normal," i.e., drawn, position.

1…Kh3!

White resigned, since after 3 Ke3 Kg3 4 f4 Kg4 5 Ke2 K×f4 6 Kf2, Black has two extra tempi (even one would have been enough), since the pawn is above the c1-h6 diagonal and the king is in front of the pawn.

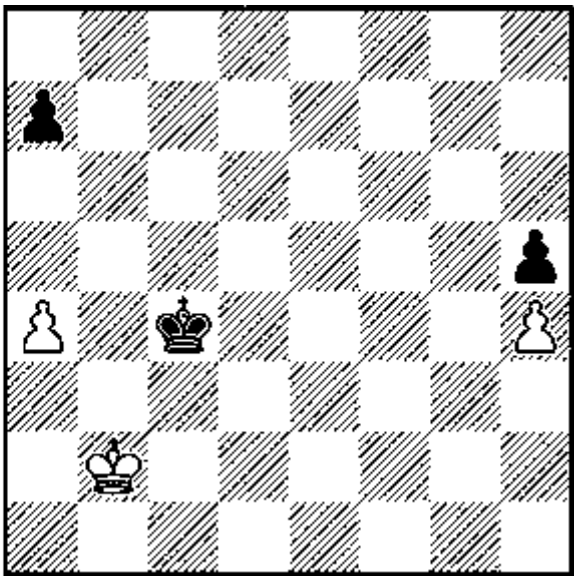
Exercises

1-136



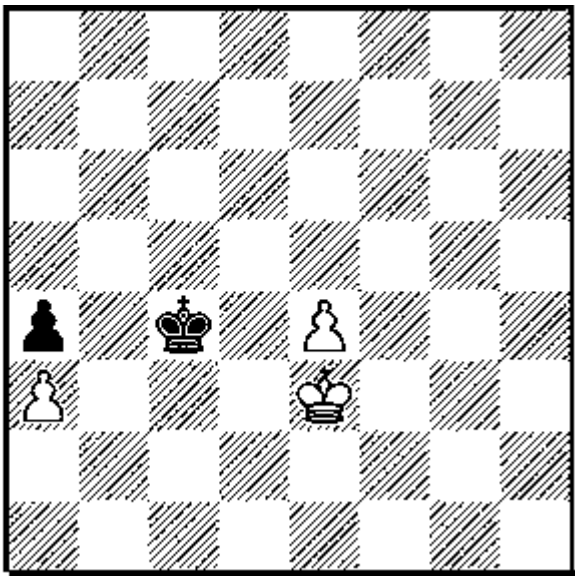
1/43
B?

1-137



1/44
W?

1-138



1/45
W?

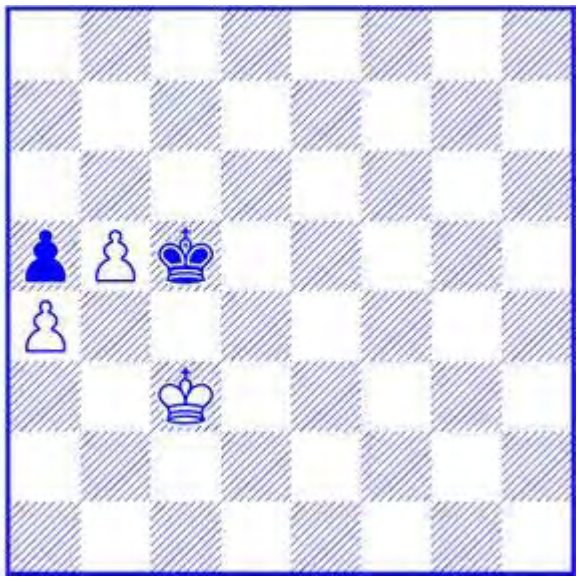
The Protected Passed Pawn

The protected passed pawn, like the outside passed pawn, is usually a most definite positional advantage. The enemy king cannot leave its square, and cannot capture it, whereas our king has full freedom of movement.

Two Pawns to One

These positions are generally won.

1-139



W

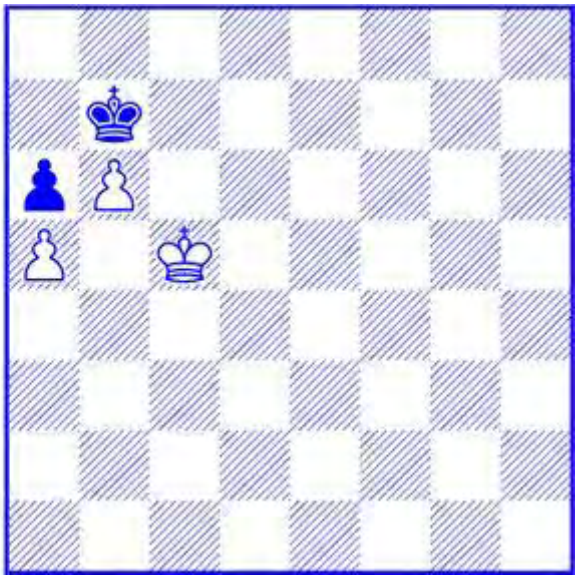
1 Kd3 Kd5 2 Ke3 Ke5 3 Kf3 Kd5 4 Kf4 Kd6 5 Ke4 Ke6 6 Kd4 Kd6 7 Kc4 (Black must give up the opposition) **7…Kc7 8 Kd5!**

8 Kc5?! is inaccurate: 8…Kb7, and White cannot continue 9 b6? because of 9…Ka6! 10 Kc6 stalemate.

8…Kb6 9 Kd6 Kb7 10 Kc5⊙ Kc7 11 b6+ Kb7 12 Kb5+–.

Now let's look at the two most important drawn positions. The first is an elementary one, but it comes up rather regularly. The second is less likely to occur, but it is very instructive.

1-140



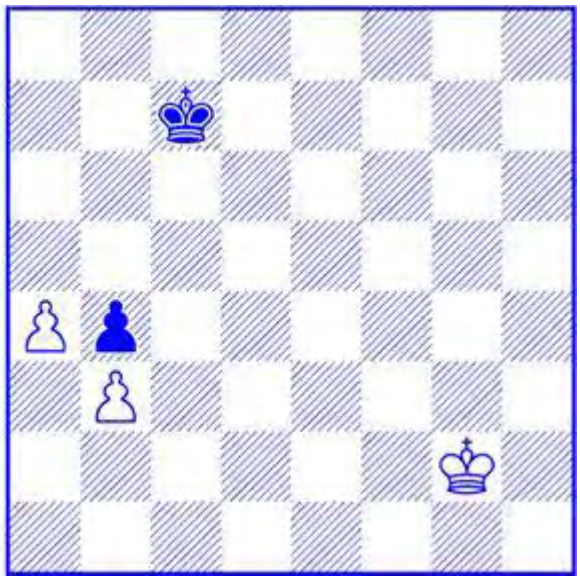
B

Black plays **1…Kb8 2 Kc6 Kc8**=.

Move the whole position one file to the right, and White wins easily by sacrificing the pawn and then winning the enemy's last pawn.

F. Dedrle, 1921

1-141



B?

The key squares are c4, d4, and e4. Black can protect them, if he can control the opposition when the enemy king approaches.

Let's determine the corresponding squares. With White's king on d3, f3 or h3, Black's king must occupy d5; the e3- and g3-squares correspond to e5. When the king advances farther, Black must keep the lateral opposition, maneuvering along the d- and e-files.

When White's king is on the second rank, Black's king must stay next to the d5- and e5-squares – specifically, on d6 or e6. So the first move – as well as all the play that follows – now becomes clear:

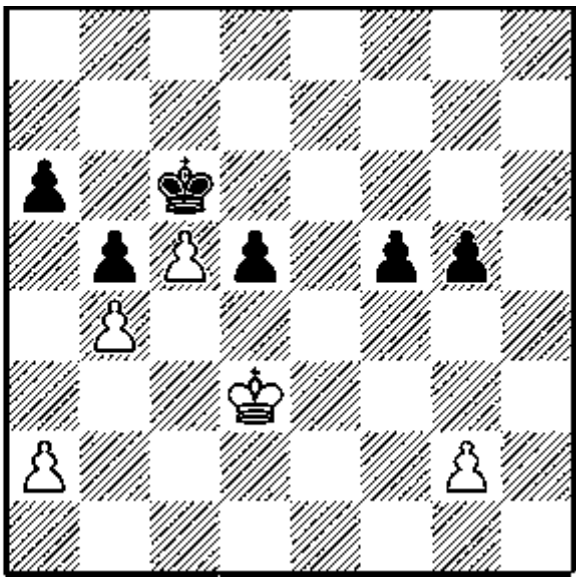
1…Kd6! (but not 1…Kc6? 2 Kg3! Kd6 3 Kf4! Kd5 4 Kf5+–; or 2…Kc5 3 Kg4! Kd4 4 Kf4+–) **2 Kh3** (2 Kf2 Ke6! 3 Ke2 Kd6!) **2…Kd5! 3 Kg3 Ke5! 4 Kh4 Kd4! 5 Kh5 Kd5! 6 Kg6 Ke6!**, etc.

Multi-Pawn Endgames

The next example features a typical plan for exploiting the advantage.

I. Bottlik, 1952

1-142



W

Black may have an extra pawn, but his position is difficult. How does he meet the threatened invasion of the white king?

1 Kd4 f4 2 Ke5 a5! 3 a3 a4

Black would prefer to exchange a pair of pawns; but after 3…ab 4 ab, he is in zugzwang.

4 Kf5 d4! 5 Ke4 d3 6 K×d3 Kd5 7 g3!

A necessary undermining of the enemy kingside pawns (undermining, by the way, is the theme of our next section). It is only a draw after 7 Ke2? g4 8 Kd3 Ke5 9 c6 Kd6 10 Ke4 K×c6 11 K×f4

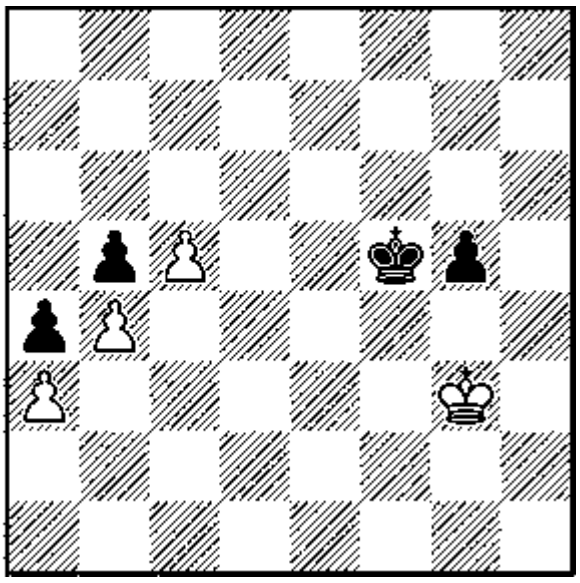
Kd5 12 K×g4 Kc4, because both pawns will queen.

7…fg

No better is 7…Ke5 8 gf+ gf 9 Ke2 Kd5 10 Kf3 Ke5 11 c6 Kd6 12 K×f4 K×c6 13 Ke5+–. This position would be a draw if Black had exchanged pawns on his 3rd move; but if he had, alas, he would not have gotten this position.

8 Ke2 (or 8 Ke3 g4 9 Ke2) **8…Ke5** (8…g4 9 Kf1 changes nothing) **9 Kf3 Ke6 10 K×g3 Kf5**

1-143



W

Here is a typical position with a protected passed pawn versus an outside passed pawn. The mined squares are g4 and f6. Most often (as here), the stronger side is unable to place his opponent in zugzwang. The only thing to be done then is to advance one's own passed pawn, and exchange it for the other side's passed pawn. Sometimes this wins, sometimes not. In the similar situation that occurred as one of the variations of the game Averbakh-Bebchuk (Diagram 1-112), we were able to lose a move to Black, making use of our reserve tempo (in that case, h4-h5).

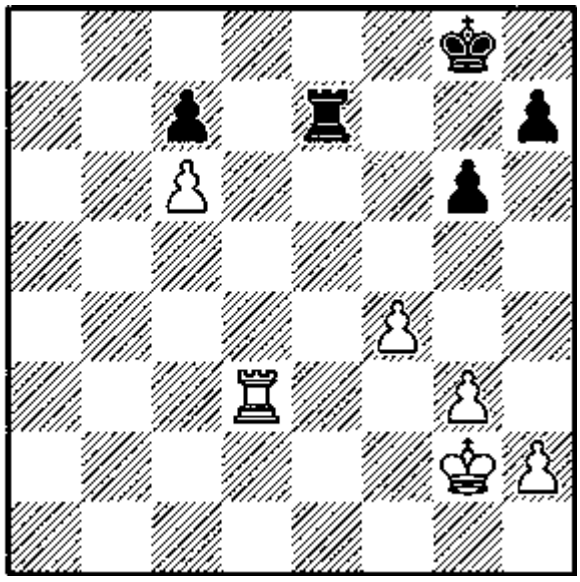
11 Kf3 Ke5 12 Kg4 Kf6 13 c6 Ke6 14 K×g5 Kd6 15 Kf5 K×c6 16 Ke6+–.

Tragicomedies

Here we shall include examples of overestimating the power of the protected passed pawn.

Shirov – Timman
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1-144



W

1 Kf3! looks good. Black responds 1…Re6, and if White defends the pawn by 2 Rc3, then Black will have decent drawing chances, in view of the passive position of White's rook. White could

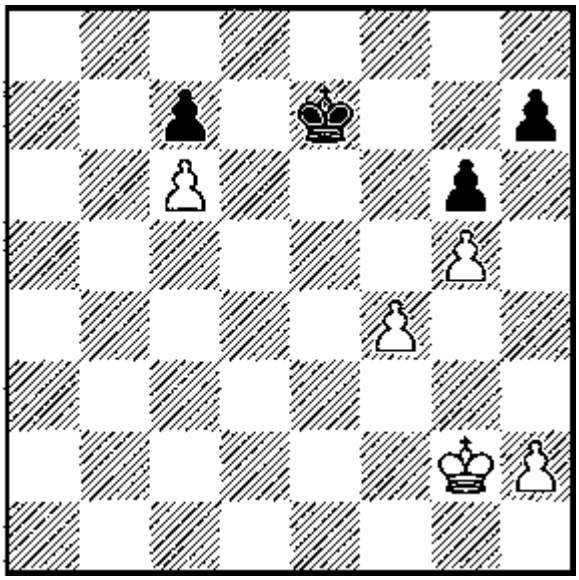
trade off the rooks by playing 2 Rd8+ Kf7 3 Rd7+ Re7 4 R×e7+ K×e7 – this leads by force to a queen endgame, where White has an extra g-pawn: 5 Kg4 Kd6 6 Kg5 K×c6 7 Kh6 Kb7 8 K×h7 c5 9 K×g6 c4 10 f5 c3 11 f6 c2 12 f7 c1Q 13 f8Q Qc2+ 14 Qf5 Q×h2. Objectively speaking, this position is won (see Chapter 12); however, converting this advantage is not easy, and would take another several dozen moves.

None of this appealed to Shirov. The grandmaster discovered what seemed to him like a more forcing means to the desired end.

1 g4? Re6 2 Rd8+?! (2 Rc3) **2…Kf7 3 Rd7+ Re7 4 R×e7+ K×e7 5 g5!**

1-145

B



And in this position, Timman resigned. Both sides believed that 5…Kd6 was refuted by the pawn breakthrough 6 h4 K×c6 7 f5 gf 8 h5 Kd7 9 g6 hg 10 h6+–.

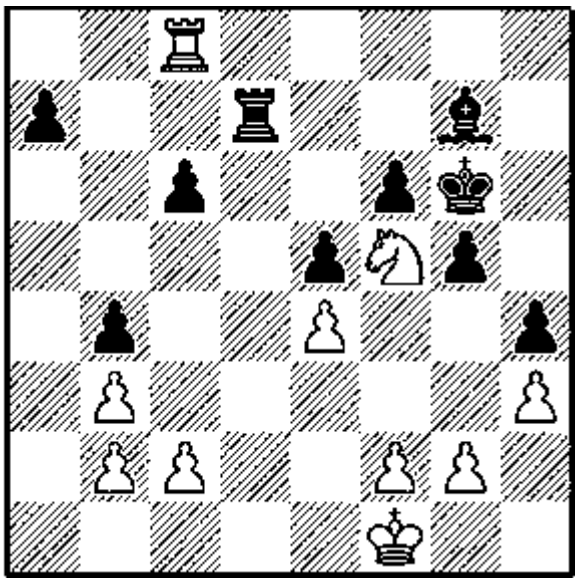
But Black does not have to take on f5! He could draw with the continuation 7…Kd7 8 f6 Ke6(e8). This is the same position as in our previous example (a protected passed pawn versus an outside passed pawn). The mined squares are c6 and d8. With kings at d5 and d7, Black plays 1…Ke8!, after which neither 2 Ke6 Kf8 3 f7 c5, nor 2 Kc6 Kd8⊙ 3 f7 Ke7 4 K×c7 K×f7 will do better than draw. If Black wants, he can even leave his pawn at c6, instead of c7.

Aronin – Smyslov

USSR ch, Moscow 1951

1-146

W



Black's position is quite hopeless. The simplest solution is 1 R×c6, or 1 Rg8 Kh7 2 Re8! △ 3 Re7. However, the game was adjourned here, and Aronin chose, after home analysis, to cash in his advantage by entering a pawn ending.

1 Rg8 Kh7 2 R×g7+?? R×g7 3 N×g7 K×g7 4 g4

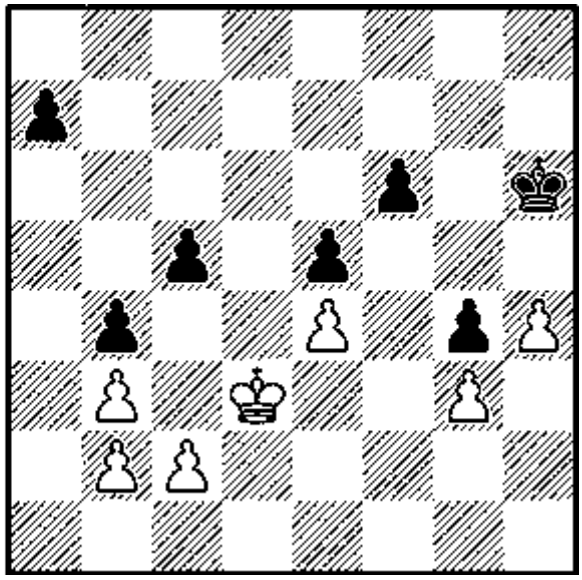
Before marching his king over to the queenside, White wishes to close up the kingside, to prevent Black's potential counterplay by …f6-f5 and …g5-g4. Aronin examined the lengthy variation 4…Kf7 5 Ke2 Ke6 6 Kd3 Kd6 7 Kc4 a5 (7…c5 8 Kb5) 8 f3 Kd7 9 Kc5 Kc7 10 c3 bc 11 bc Kb7 12 Kd6 Kb6 13 c4 Kb7 14 c5+–.

He did not think the exchange on g3 was playable, since White then gets the possibility of creating an outside passed h-pawn. However, Smyslov found an elegant defense: he offered his opponent, not an outside passed pawn, but a **protected** passed pawn!

4…hg! 5 fg g4!! 6 h4 c5 7 Ke2 Kh7 8 Kd3 Kh6

1-147

W



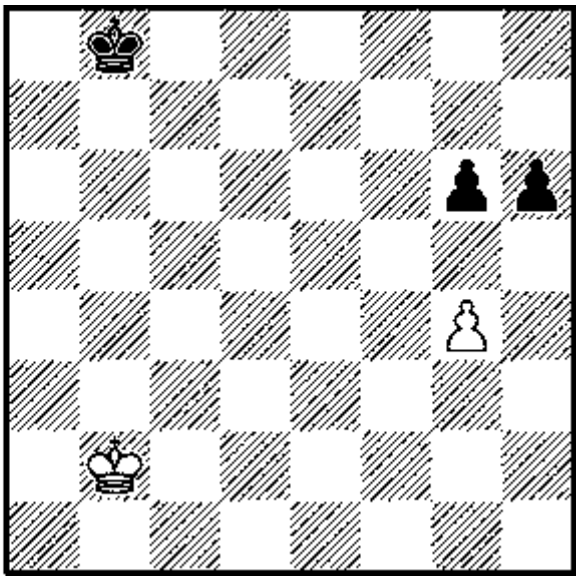
It turns out that the king can go no further: 9 Kc4? f5! 10 ef (10 Kd3 f4 11 gf ef 12 Ke2 Kh5 13 e5 Kg6, and 14…Kf5–+) 10…e4⊙–+.

9 c3 a5 10 cb ab! Draw.

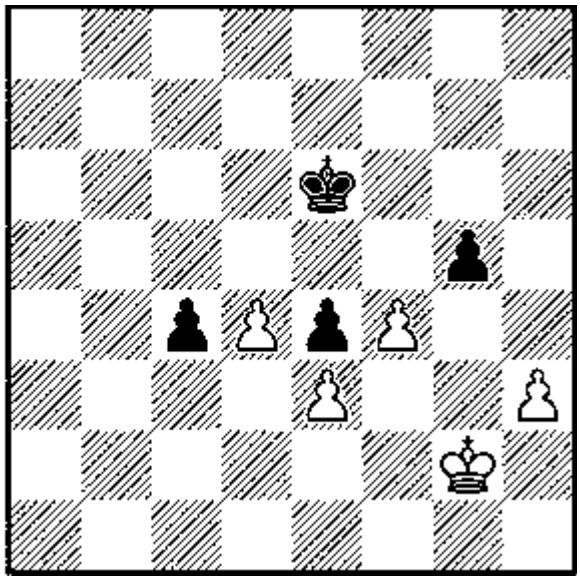
Exercises

1-148

1/46
W?



1-149



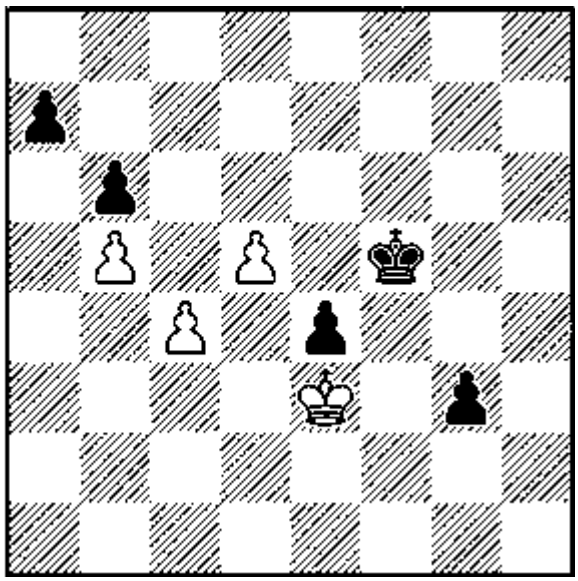
1/47
W?

Undermining

Sometimes the pawns are too strong to be successfully attacked by the king. In such cases, undermining can be used successfully – the exchange of a pair or two of pawns, with the aim of weakening the pawn chain.

Keres – Alekhine
Dresden 1936

1-150



B?

Grigoriev demonstrated the simplest winning method, involving an undermining on the queenside.

1…Ke5! 2 Ke2 Kd6 3 Ke3 Kc7 4 Ke2 Kb7 5 Ke3 a6 (5…a5) **6 ba+ K×a6 7 Ke2 Kb7** (7…b5?? 8 d6 Kb6 9 cb=) **8 Ke3 Kc7 9 Ke2 Kd6 10 Ke3 b5 11 cb K×d5**–+

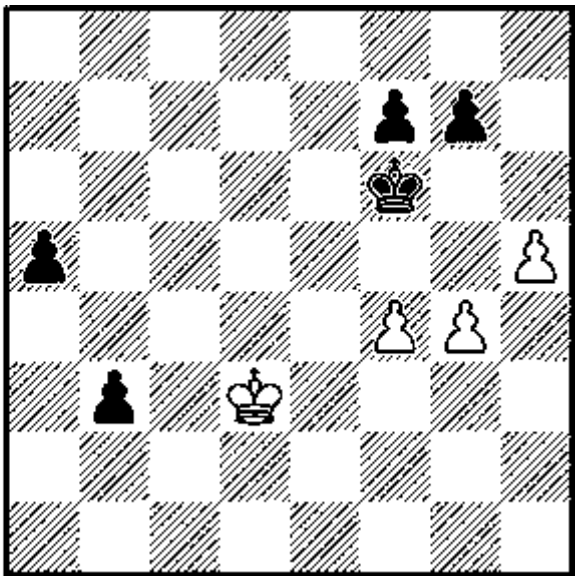
On the other hand, Alekhine's plan of going into a queen endgame was also quite strong.

1…Kg4!? 2 d6 g2 3 Kf2 Kh3 4 d7 e3+! 5 Kf3 g1Q 6 d8Q Qf2+ 7 Ke4 e2 8 Qd7+ Kg2 9 Qg4+ Kf1 White resigned.

Tragicomedies

Golberg – Zhuk
USSR 1934

1-151



B

1…a4 (1…g6?? 2 h6 g5 3 f5 wins; 1…g5? 2 f5=)

2 g5+ Kf5??

The only winning plan was undermining with …f7-f6. But first, Black had to bring his king to h7. As Grigoriev pointed out, the right way was 2…Ke7! 3 Kc3 Kf8 4 Kb2 Kg8 5 Ka3 Kh7 6 Kb2 f6! 7 Ka3 fg 8 fg Kg8 9 Kb2 Kf7 10 Ka3 Ke6 11 Kb2 Kf5.

3 Kc3 Ke6?

Having let the win slip, Black now lets slip the draw, which he could have had by playing 3…f6! 4 g6 Ke6.

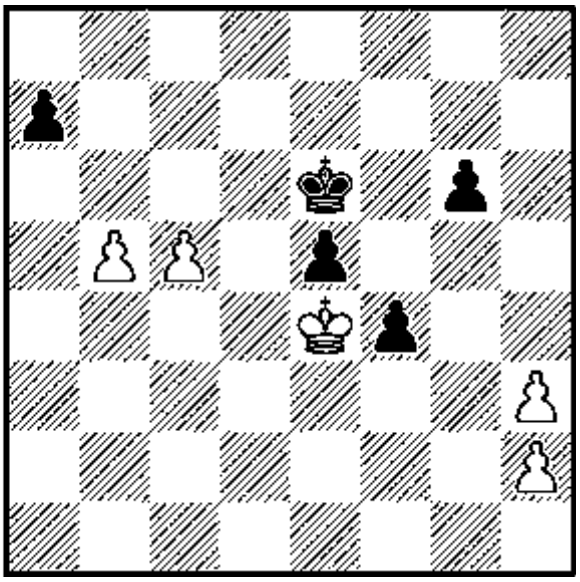
4 h6 gh 5 gh Kf6 6 f5⊙

Black resigned. We have already seen the final position in the chapter devoted to the rule of the square.

Sulipa – Gritsak

Lvov 1995

1-152



B?

1…g5??

Far from improving Black's position, this move actually degrades it significantly by giving his opponent the possibility of exchanging a pair of kingside pawns, and creating a passed h-pawn.

White had no answer to the undermining plan with 1…Kd7! 2 Kf3 Kc7 (2…Ke7 is also good: 3 Ke4 Ke6⊙ 4 Kf3 Kd5 5 c6 Kd6 6 Ke4 a6–+, or 4 h4 Kd7! 5 Kf3 Ke7 6 Ke4 Ke6, triangulating again and again with the king, until the opponent runs out of pawn moves) 3 h4 Kc8 (not 3…Kb7 4 Ke4 a6? at once, in view of 5 ba+ K×a6 6 c6! Kb6 7 K×e5 f3 8 Kd6 f2 9 c7=) 4 Ke4 Kb7⊙ 5 h3 Kc8 6 Kf3 Kc7 7 Ke4 Kb7⊙ 8 Kf3 a6!–+

2 Kf3??

The wrong order of moves. After 2 h4! gh 3 Kf3 Kd5 4 c6 Kd6 5 Kg4 a6 6 ba K×c6 7 K×h4 Kb6 8 Kg4 K×a6 9 h4, it is now White who wins.

2…Kd5 3 c6 Kd6??

3…e4+! was necessary: 4 Kg4 Kd6–+.

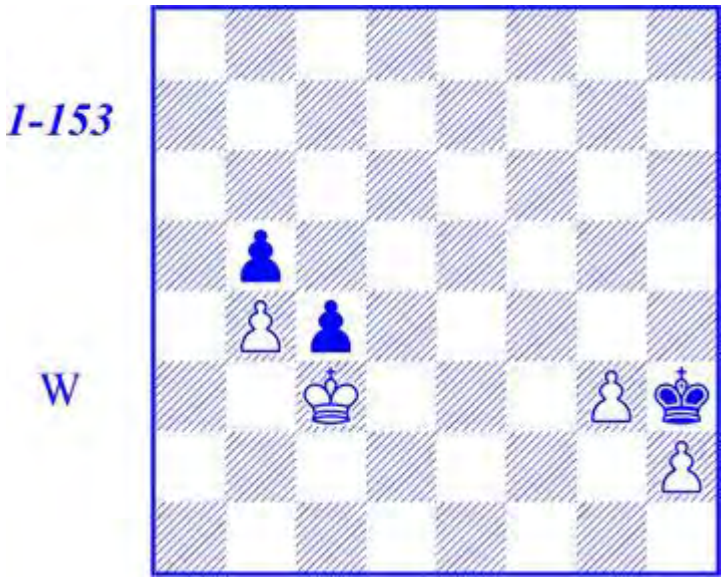
4 Ke4??

For the fourth time, the appraisal of the position is reversed. White wins with 4 h4! gh 5 Kg4.

4…a6 5 ba K×c6 6 Kf3 Kb6 7 h4 (too late!) **7…gh 8 Kg4 K×a6 9 K×h4 Kb6 10 Kg4 Kc6 11 h4 Kd6** White resigned.

Two Connected Passed Pawns

B. Horwitz, J. Kling, 1851



Here we have a typical situation with two connected passed pawns. The draw would appear to be inescapable, since the white king is tied to the square of the protected passed pawn at c4. But in fact, in such cases White can sometimes leave the square to help his pawns queen or mate his opponent.

White's plan usually consists of the following elements:

The farthest possible advance of the pawns;

The optimum placement of the pawns – "ready to roll";

Choosing the best time for the king's decisive advance.

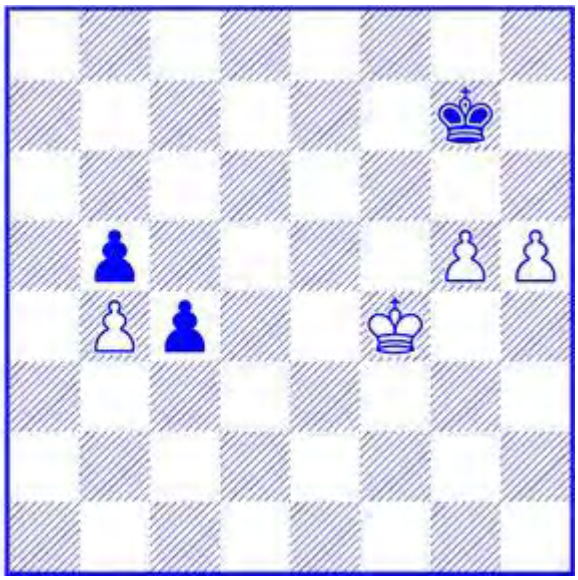
Let's watch this plan in action. In the first stage the king, without leaving the square of the c4-pawn (which ends at f4), aids in the advance of its pawns.

1 Kd4 Kg4 2 h4 Kh5 3 Ke3 Kg4 4 Ke4 Kh5 5 Kf4 Kh6 6 g4 Kg6 7 h5+ Kh6 8 Kf3 Kg5 9 Ke4 Kh6 10 Kf4

Triangulation is White's most important weapon in this ending.

10…Kh7 11 g5 Kg7

1-154



W

12 g6!

The ideal pawn array! The erroneous 12 h6+? would throw away the win.

12…Kf6 13 Ke4 Kg7 14 Kf3 Kf6 15 Kf4 Kg7

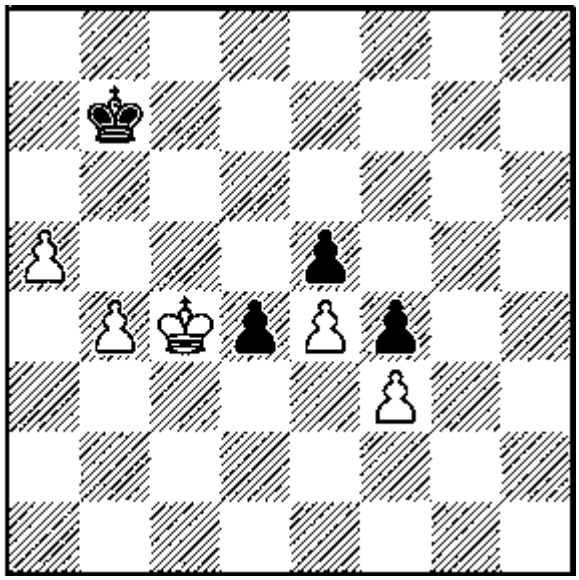
Now that White has strengthened his position to its utmost, it is time for the decisive advance!

16 Kg5! c3 17 h6+ Kg8 18 Kf6 c2 19 h7+ Kh8 20 g7+ (or 20 Kf7 c1Q 21 g7+) **20…K×h7 21 Kf7 c1Q 22 g8Q+ Kh6 23 Qg6#.**

Tragicomedies

Potter – Zukertort
London m (5) 1875

1-155



W

The position is in fact the same as in our preceding example, which was published a quartercentury before this game. White, unacquainted with endgame theory, agreed to a draw here.

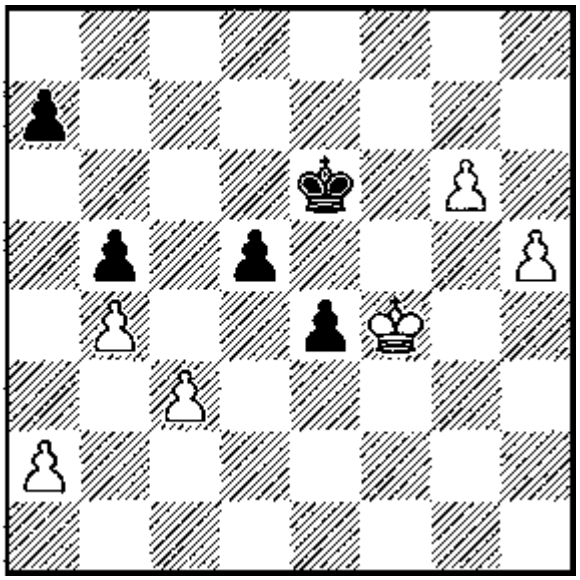
The win is elementary:

1 b5 Ka7 2 b6+ Ka6 3 Kb4 Kb7 4 Kb5! d3 5 a6+ Kb8 6 Kc6 d2 7 a7+ Ka8 8 b7+ K×a7 9 Kc7 d1Q 10 b8Q+ Ka6 11 Qb6#.

A century later, chessplayers, alas, continue to make the very same mistakes.

Bouaziz – Pomar
Siegen ol 1970

1-156



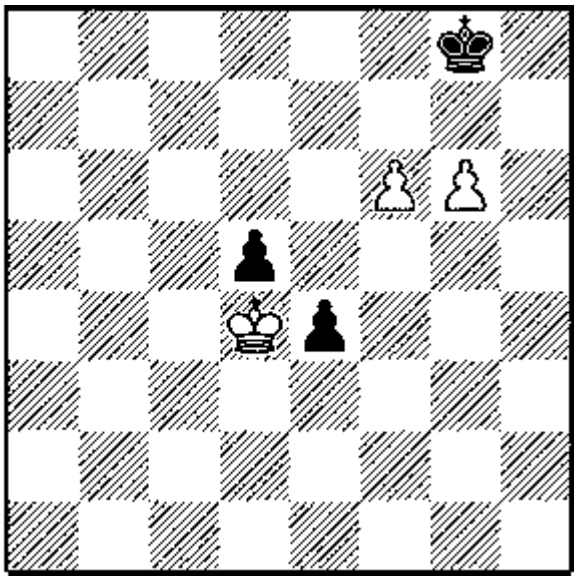
W?

The proper array of the pawns would be g6/h7. So the win is: 1 h6! Kf6 2 h7 Kg7 3 Kg4 (the immediate 3 Kf5 e3 4 Ke6 e2 5 h8Q+ K×h8 6 Kf7 was also possible) 3…Kh8 4 Kf5 e3 5 Kf6 e2 6 g7+ K×h7 7 Kf7.

White chose **1 g7?? Kf7 2 h6 Kg8**. Draw, because 3 Kf5(e5) is met by 3…Kf7!.

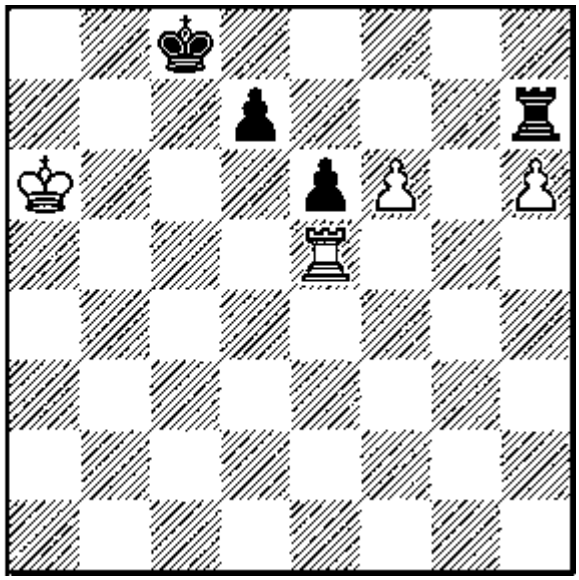
Exercises

1-157



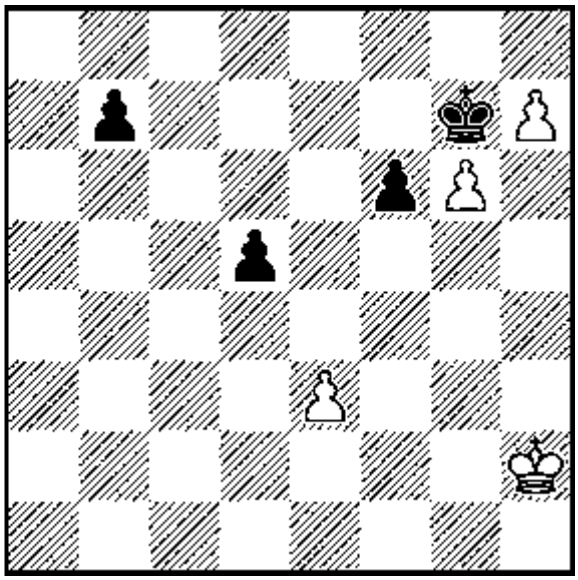
1/48
W?

1-158



1/49
W?/Play

1-159



1/50
W?/Play

Stalemate

The Stalemate Refuge

When there are only a very few pieces left on the board, stalemate becomes one of the most important defensive resources – remember the “king and pawn vs. king” ending, if nothing else.

Out of the many possible stalemate situations, it is worth noting the following:

1-160

B

The loss of the c5-pawn appears inevitable; however, Black can still save himself.

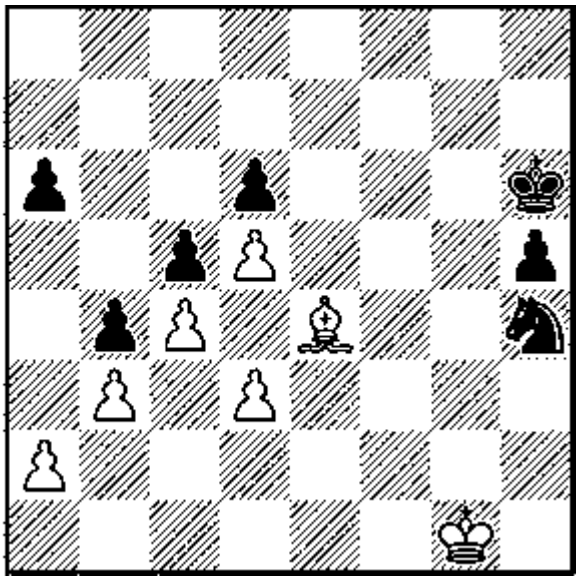
1…Kb6! 2 Kd5 a6! 3 Kd6 Ka5!, and the pawn is untouchable, because of the stalemate.

Transposition of moves by 1…a6?? would be a grievous error – White would reply 2 a5!, eliminating the king’s stalemate refuge.

In the following endgame, we shall see, besides stalemate, other techniques we saw earlier.

Nikolaevsky – Taimanov
USSR ch, Tbilisi 1966

1-161



W?

How should this game end?

1 d4! (breakthrough) **1…Ng6!**

Of course not 1…cd? 2 c5, and a pawn queens.

2 dc dc 3 B×g6

3 d6?! Ne5, and now it is White who must work for the draw.

3…K×g6 4 Kf2

Here is a position we know: the protected versus the outside passed pawn. White cannot get a zugzwang position – kings at h4 and g6, with Black to move; therefore, he will have to trade his d-pawn for Black's h-pawn. This exchange would have led to victory, if Black's pawn were at a5 (instead of a6), or White's pawn at a4 (instead of a2). As it is, the upshot is stalemate.

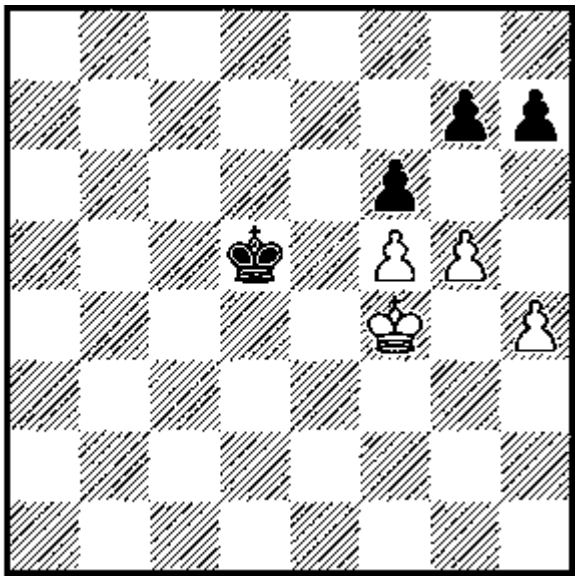
4…Kf6 5 Kg3 Kg5 6 Kh3 Kf5 (6…h4) **7 Kh4 Kg6 8 d6 Kf6 9 K×h5 Ke6 10 Kg5 K×d6 11 Kf5 Kc6 12 Ke5 Kb6 13 Kd5 Ka5! 14 K×c5** stalemate.

Tragicomedies

Chigorin – Tarrasch

Ostende 1905

1-162



W?

The draw is obtained by constructing a stalemate refuge: 1 Kg4! (not 1 g6?? h5!–+) 1…Ke4 2 g6! h6 (2…hg 3 fg f5+ 4 Kg5 f4 5 h5 f3 6 h6=) 3 Kh5!=.

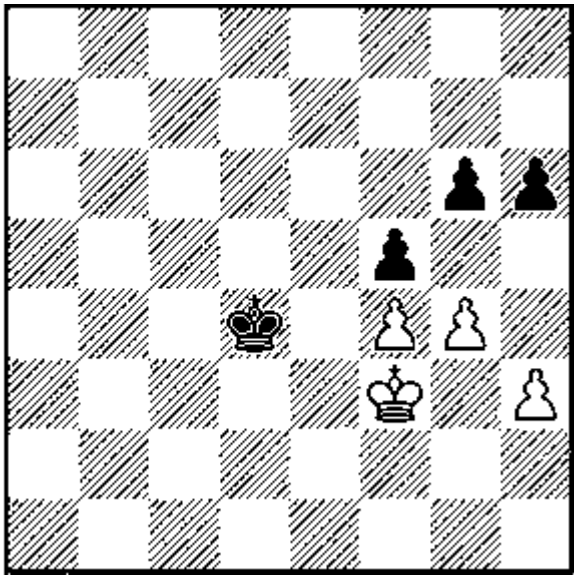
The game continuation was: **1 gf?? gf 2 Kg4 Ke4 3 Kh3 Kf4** White resigned. Also insufficient was 3 Kh5 K×f5 4 Kh6, when Black's simplest win is 4…Kg4 5 K×h7 Kh5! (shouldering), but

another possible win is 4…Ke6 5 K×h7 f5 6 Kg6 f4 7 h5 f3 8 h6 f2 9 h7 f1Q 10 h8Q Qf5+, with mate soon to follow.

Aronson – Mednis
USA 1953

1-163

W?



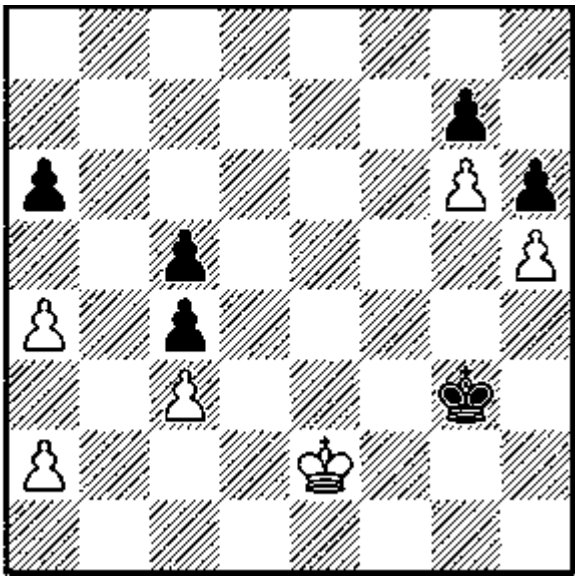
The exact same position as in the previous diagram, except with all the pieces one rank lower. Here, 1 Kg3? Ke3 2 g5 hg! o would be a mistake; but 1 g5! h5 2 Kg3 Ke4 3 Kh4!= is possible.

The game actually continued **1 h4?? h5**–+.

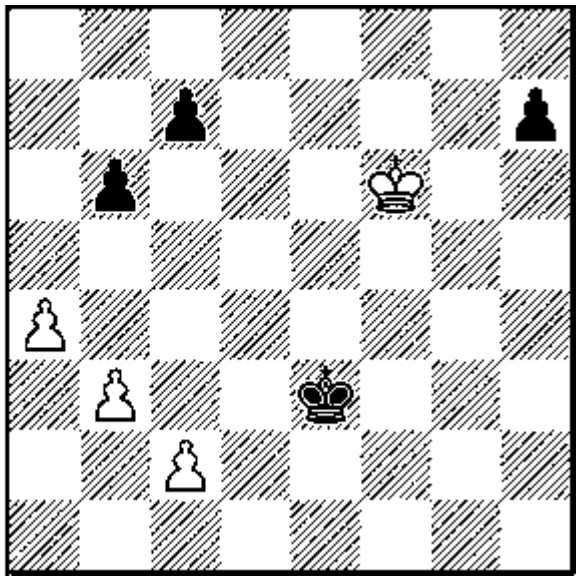
Exercises

1-164

1/51
B?



1-165



1/52
W?/Play

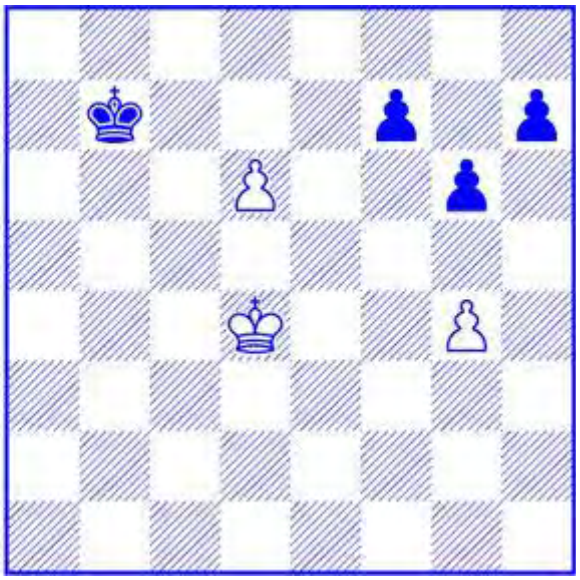
"Semi-Stalemate"

This is what I call the situation when the king is stalemated (on the edge or in the corner of the board), but there are still pawn moves left to make. Instead of stalemate, what we get is zugzwang – usually, a fatal one for the stalemated side.

Here are two simple examples:

Marshall – Réti
New York 1924*

1-166



W

1 g5! (or 1 Ke5 Kc8 2 g5!) **1…Kc6 2 Ke5 Kd7 3 Kd5!** (3 Kf6?? K×d6 4 K×f7 Ke5–+) **3…Kd8 4 Kc6 Kc8 5 d7+ Kd8 6 Kd6⊙+–.**

J. Kling, B. Horwitz, 1851

1-167

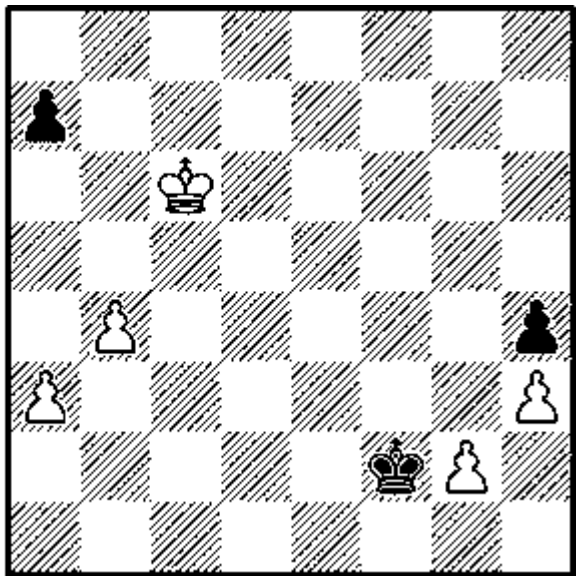
W?

1 Bf3+ Kg1 2 Bh1! K×h1 3 Kf1!⊙ d5 4 ed e4 5 d6 e3 6 d7 e2+ 7 K×e2 Kg2 8 d8Q h1Q 9 Qg5+ Kh3 10 Qh5+ Kg2 11 Qg4+ Kh2 12 Kf2+–.

The next example is considerably more difficult and hence more interesting.

Mandler – Procházka
Czechoslovakia 1976

1-168



W?

The straightforward 1 b5? leads to a drawn queen endgame with an extra rook's pawn: 1…K×g2 2 Kb7 K×h3 3 K×a7 Kg4! 4 b6 h3 5 b7 h2 6 b8Q h1Q.

The other, more promising plan is to squeeze the enemy king into the corner. However, it requires lengthy and accurate calculation.

1 Kd5!! K×g2 2 Ke4 K×h3 3 Kf3 Kh2 4 Kf2!

After 4 b5? (or 4 a4?), Black's king can use Réti's idea to help him get to the queenside in time: 4…Kg1 5 Kg4 Kg2! 6 K×h4 Kf3=.

4…h3

4…a6 is inferior: 5 a4 h3 6 a5! Kh1 7 b5 h2 8 Kf1!⊙+–.

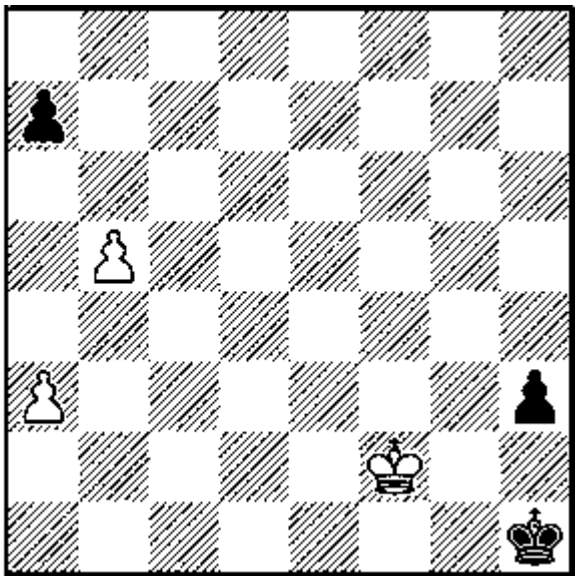
5 b5!

5 a4? would be a mistake, in view of 5…a5! 6 ba Kh1 7 a6 h2=.

5…Kh1

1-169

W?



6 Kf1!

Again, not 6 a4? a5!=. Now Black must stalemate his own king, since 6…Kh2 allows an easy win by 7 a4 Kh1 8 a5 a6 (8…h2 9 Kf2 a6 10 Kf1) 9 Kf2.

6…h2 7 b6!!

The only move! White only gets a draw after 7 a4? a5! or 7 Kf2? a5!.

7…a5

7…ab 8 a4 b5 9 a5+–.

8 b7 a4 9 Ke2! Kg1 10 b8Q h1Q 11 Qb6+

White wants mate. As can easily be seen, exchanging queens wins also.

11…Kh2 12 Qd6+ Kg1 13 Qd4+ Kh2 14 Qh4+ Kg2 15 Qg4+ Kh2 16 Kf2 Black resigned.

Reserve Tempi

Exploiting Reserve Tempi

We have already seen more than once how the outcome of a game may hinge on one side's store of reserve pawn tempi. This is not surprising, considering that zugzwang is the fundamental weapon in the majority of pawn endings.

The rules involved in the use of reserve tempi are simple and self-evident:

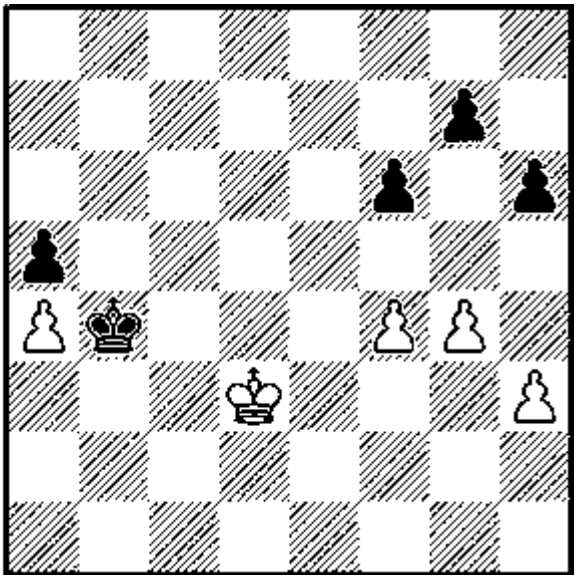
(1) Use every chance to accumulate reserve tempi and to deprive your opponent of his;

(2) Hold onto them – do not waste them except when absolutely necessary.

Let's observe these rules in action. The first is illustrated in the following two examples.

1-170

W?



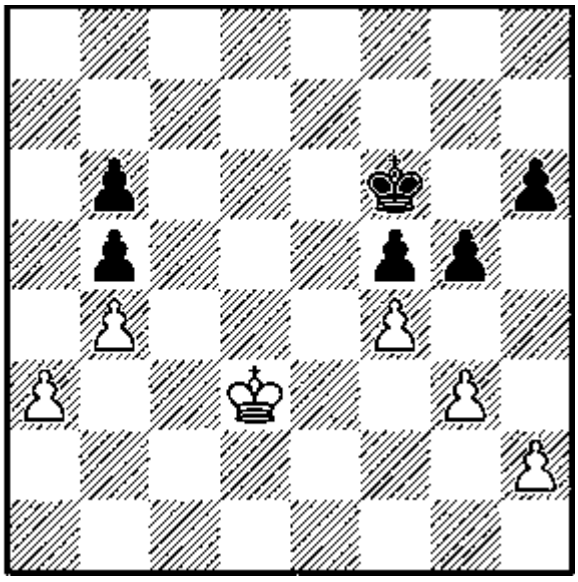
1 f5!

This move secures White two reserve pawn tempi – just enough to squeeze the enemy king at the edge of the board.

1…K×a4 2 Kc4 Ka3 3 Kc3 a4 4 h4 Ka2 5 Kc2 a3 (5…h5 6 gh a3 7 h6 gh 8 h5⊙ **Ka1 7 Kc1**=.

Despotovic – Dvoretsky
Moscow tt 1968

1-171



B?

1…g4!

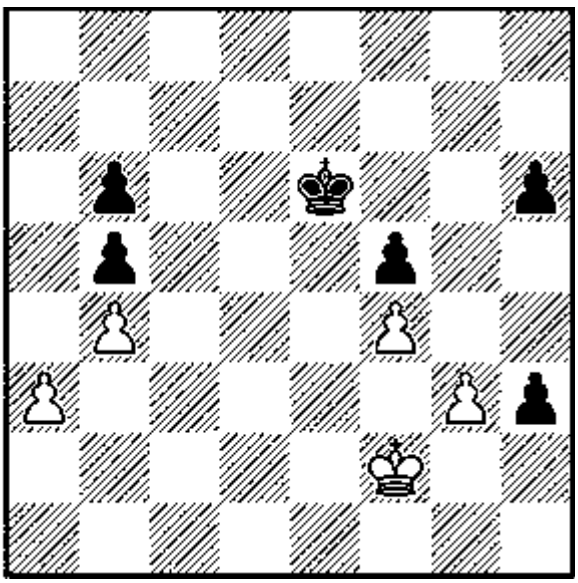
Now Black has the reserve tempo h6-h5. Here, the game was adjourned; White sealed the move 2 Kc3?, but later resigned without continuing, in view of 2…Ke6 3 Kd4 (3 Kb3 Kd5 4 a4 ba+ 5 K×a4 Kc4–+) 3…Kd6 4 Kc3 Kd5 5 Kd3 h5–+. Thanks to his reserve tempo, Black put his opponent into zugzwang, and his king broke through on the wing.

But White could have saved himself by playing **2 Ke3! Ke6 3 h3!**

Yes! White loses with either 3 h4? Kd5 4 Kd3 h5⊙ or 3 Kf2? Kd5 4 h3 h5!

But now what is Black to do? On 3…h5 4 h4 (or 4 hg), he loses his reserve tempo, and the position is now drawn: 4…Kd5 5 Kd3⊙. And in the sharp variation **3…gh 4 Kf2**

1-172



B

4…Kd5, White has time to create kingside counterplay.

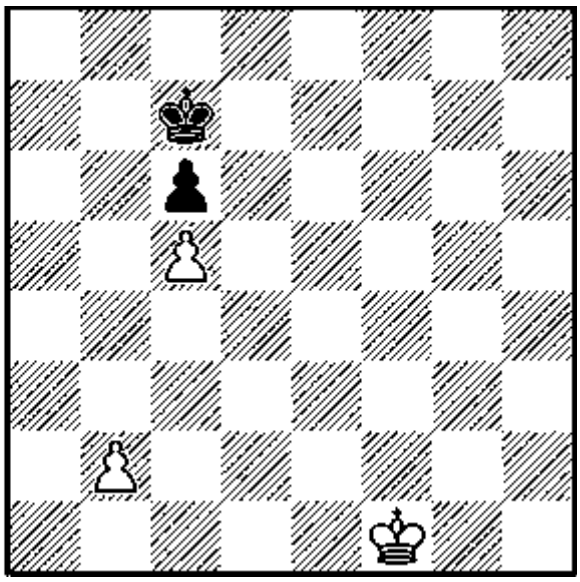
Karsten Müller noted that if, instead of 4…Kd5, Black were to try 4…Kf6 5 Kg1 Kg7!?, then the only move to draw would be 6 Kh1! – the h2-square is mined. The problem is that after 6 Kh2? Kg6 7 K×h3 Kh5⊙ 8 g4+, Black does not play 8…fg+? 9 Kg3 Kg6 10 K×g4⊙ Kf6 (10…h5+ 11

Kh4) 11 Kh5 Kf5 12 K×h6 K×f4 13 Kg6, when the white king reaches the queenside in time, but 8…Kg6! 9 Kh4 Kf6! 10 Kh5 fg 11 K×g4 Kg6 – here, it is White who falls into zugzwang.

5 Kg1 Kc4 6 Kh2 h5 (6…Kb3? 7 g4!) **7 K×h3 Kb3 8 Kh4 K×a3 9 K×h5** (9 Kg5!?) **9…K×b4 10 g4 fg 11 K×g4 Kc3** (11…Kc5 12 Kf3!) **12 f5 b4 13 f6 b3 14 f7 b2 15 f8Q b1Q 16 Qf6+**, and the queen endgame is drawn.

N. Grigoriev, 1931

1-173
$



W?

White's king has nothing to do on the kingside (with the kings on the fourth and sixth ranks, it is easy to establish that the opposition is meaningless, and therefore White cannot create zugzwang). The winning plan will be to feint with the king on the queenside, and then march over to the kingside. For this plan to succeed, White will need both of his reserve pawn tempi (with the pawn at b3, the position would be drawn); so it is important not to lose them on the way.

1 Ke2 Kd7

1…Kb7 2 Kd3 Ka6 would be senseless, in view of 3 b4 (3 Kc4) 3…Kb5 4 Kc3 Ka6 5 Kc4! Kb7 6 Kd4+–.

2 Kd3 Ke7! 3 Kc3!

Both sides must keep in mind that the e6- and c4-squares are mined. After 2…Ke6 3 Kc4, Black cannot play 3…Ke5 in view of 4 b4 Ke6 5 b5; however, if he does not play this, White's king continues on his way to the queenside. Now on 2…Ke7 3 Kc4? Ke6, the line 4 Kb4(b3) Kd5= is bad; so is 4 Kd4 Kf6! 5 Kc3 Ke5! – therefore, White has to play 4 b3, prematurely using up one of his reserve tempi, which renders the win impossible.

3…Ke6 4 Kc4 Kd7 5 Kb4 Kc7 6 Ka5 Kb7 7 b3!

The first tempo is used up, in order to force the black king away from the kingside.

7…Ka7 8 Kb4 Kb7 (8…Ka6 9 Kc3 Ka5 10 Kc4 Ka6 11 b4⊙) **9 Kc4 Kc7 10 Kd4 Kd7 11 Ke5 Ke7 12 b4**⊙+–

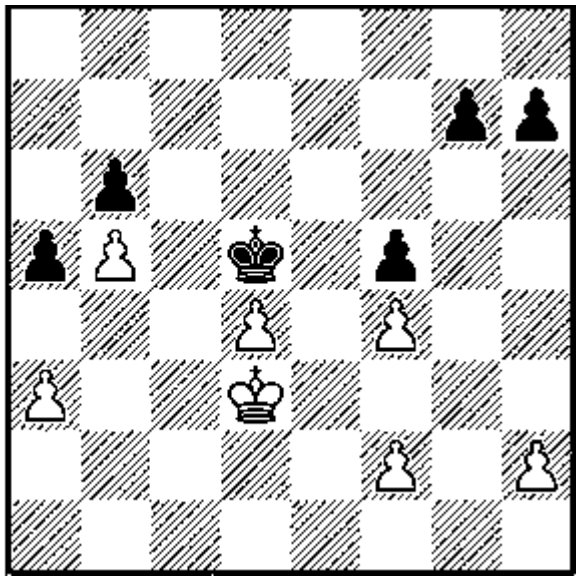
That is where we use the second tempo!

Tragicomedies

Kachiani – Maric
Kishinev izt 1995

1-174

W?



On the kingside – equality (each side has three pawn moves). White has the reserve tempo a3-a4 on the queenside. Unfortunately, she was too eager to use it:

1 a4??

White wins by 1 Kc3! Ke6 (1…Ke4 2 Kc4 K×f4 3 Kd5+–) 2 Kc4 Kd6 3 d5 Kd7 4 Kd4 Kd6 5 a4 h6 6 h3 g6 (6…g5 7 fg hg 8 f3 f4 9 Ke4+–) 7 h4 h5 8 f3⊙.

1…Kd6 2 Kc4 Ke6 3 d5+ Kd7 4 Kd4 Kd6⊙

Here is where White could have used the reserve tempo – but alas, it is already gone.

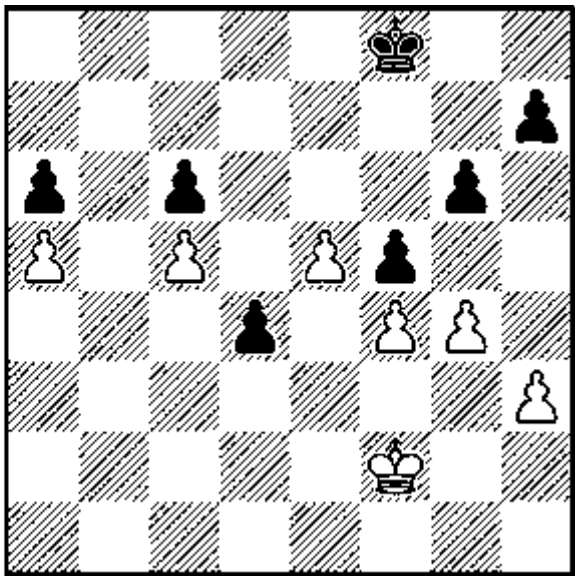
5 Kc4 Kd7 6 Kd3 Ke7

Of course, Black will not be the first to go to the mined square d6. The game soon ended in a draw.

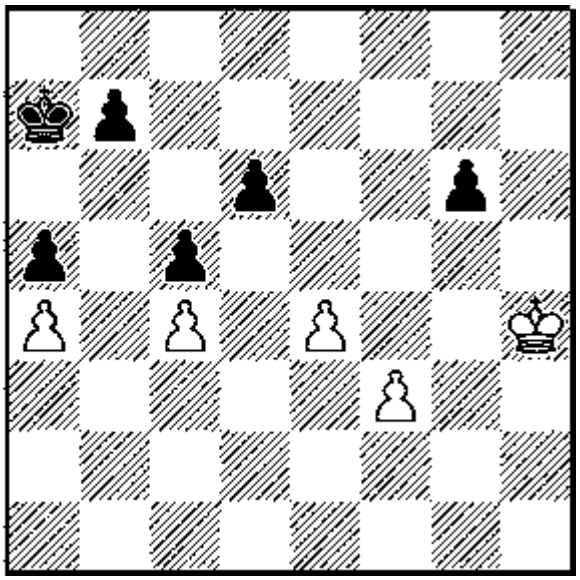
Exercises

1-175

1/53
W?

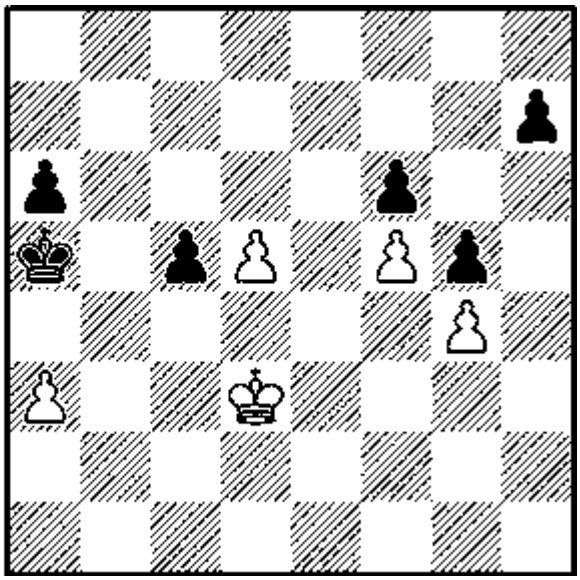


1-176



1/54
W?

1-177



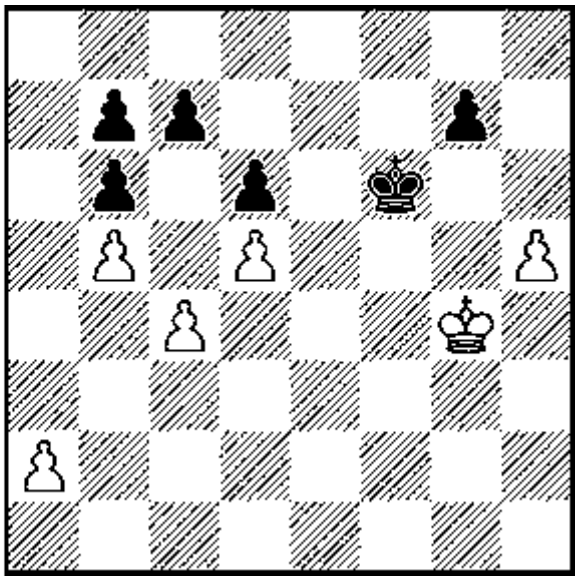
1/55
B?/Play

Steinitz's Rule

Wilhelm Steinitz, the first world champion, put forth the following paradox: that the pawns stand best on their original squares. His explanation: ***In the endgame, it is useful to have a choice of whether to advance a pawn one or two squares.*** We shall see the point of his idea to its fullest extent in the following subchapters; so I shall limit myself to just one example of it here. The analysis given below was made by Artur Yusupov when he was still quite young, with the assistance of the author.

Yusupov – Ionov
Podolsk 1977*

1-178



W?

We can see at once the idea of a pawn breakthrough on the queenside, after a2-a4 and c4-c5. Obviously, it will have no chance of succeeding unless the black king is taken far enough away.

First, it is necessary to put Black on move. It is also important to leave the a-pawn where it is, since from its original square, it has the choice of moving one or two squares forward.

1 Kf4!

In playing this, White must be prepared for 1…g6 2 h6 g5+; however, now the pawn breakthrough works: 3 Ke3! (the best square for the king to deal with the black pawns) 3…Kg6 4 a4 K×h6 5 c5! bc (5…dc 6 a5 ba 7 b6 cb 8 d6) 6 a5 c4 7 a6 ba 8 ba c3 9 a7 c2 10 Kd2.

1…Ke7 2 Kg5

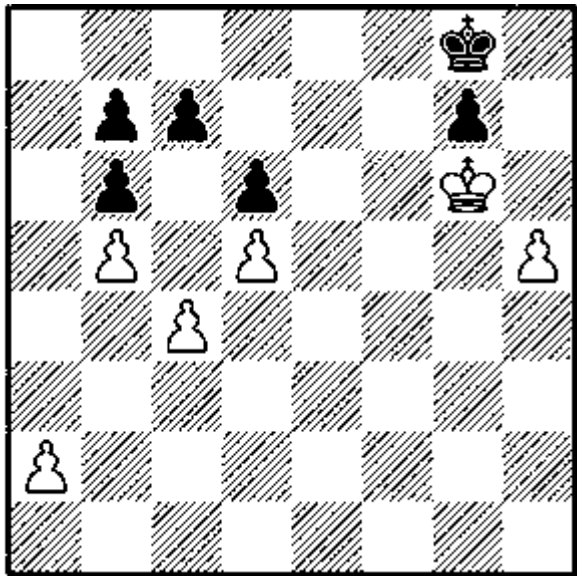
The king goes inexorably to g6, after which White – thanks to the fact that his pawn is still on a2 – can execute the breakthrough at the ideal moment: when Black's king is on g8.

2…Kf8

2…Kf7 is met by 3 Kf5 Ke7 4 Kg6 Kf8 5 a4! Kg8 6 c5!.

3 Kg6 Kg8

1-179



W?

4 a3! Kf8 5 a4 Kg8 6 c5! dc 7 a5 ba 8 b6 cb 9 d6 Kf8 10 d7 Ke7 11 K×g7 a4 12 h6 a3 13 h7 a2 14 d8Q+! K×d8 15 h8Q+

An incautious pawn advance on move one would have let the win slip. Black in response need only be careful which square he picks for his king. For example, after 1 a3?, 1…Kf7? would be a mistake: 2 Kf5 Ke7 (otherwise 3 Ke6) 3 Kg6 Kf8 4 a4⊙+–; but Black could play 1…Ke7! 2 Kg5 (2 Kf5 Kf7!) 2…Kf8! 3 Kg6 Kg8 4 a4 Kf8⊙, and the breakthrough does not work now, and the movelosing maneuver is no longer possible.

The g- and h-Pawns vs. the h-Pawn

1-180

With Black's pawn on its starting square, the only winning plan becomes a king invasion at h6. Even the conquest of the h6-square, however, only guarantees victory in the event that one of White's pawns remains on the second rank, in order to have the choice between moving one or two squares.

Black to move loses:

1…h6+ 2 Kf5 Kf7 3 h3 (3 h4 Kg7 4 Ke6 is possible, too) 3…Kg7 4 h4 Kf7 5 h5+–;

1…Kf7 2 Kh6 Kg8 3 g5 Kh8 4 h4! Kg8 5 h5 Kh8 6 g6 hg 7 hg Kg8 8 g7+–;

1…Kg8 2 Kh6! (2 Kf6? Kf8=) **2…Kh8 3 g5 Kg8 4 h3! Kh8 5 h4 Kg8 6 h5 Kh8 7 g6 hg 8 hg Kg8 9 g7**+–

But with White to move, the position is drawn. 1 Kf5 Kf7 is useless, and on 1 Kh5 h6! draws. After the h-pawn moves, Black only needs to select the right square for his king to retreat to.

1 h3 Kg8! 2 Kh6 Kh8 3 g5 Kg8 4 h4 Kh8 5 h5 Kg8 6 g6 hg 7 hg Kh8=

Clearly, 1 h4 would be met by 1…Kf7! (or 1…Kh8!) 2 Kh6 Kg8, with the same outcome. We can see that the squares g8 and h8 correspond to the position of the pawn (at h3, h4 or h5); and with White's pawn at g4, there is one correspondence, but with the pawn at g5 – it is the opposite.

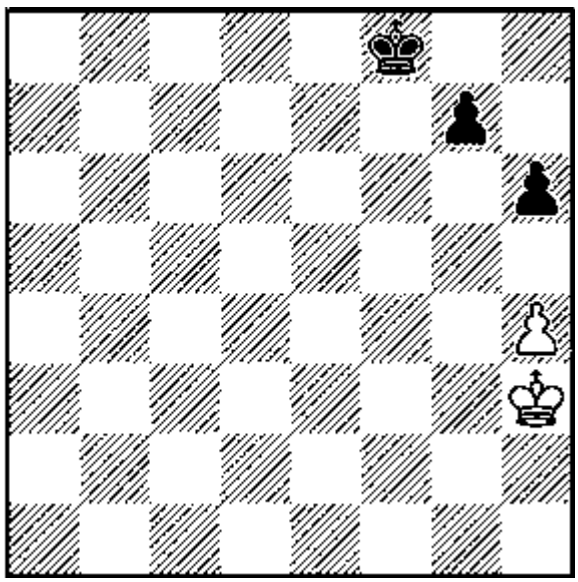
Matters are more complicated when the defending side's pawn has already left its starting square. Here everything depends on the nuances of king and pawn position. The ideas inherent in such positions are aptly illustrated by the following study.

R. Réti, A. Mandler, 1921

1-181

$

W?



1 Kg3!!

After 1 Kg4? Kf7, the position is lost. For example:

2 h5 Ke6⊙ (the diagonal opposition);

2 Kh5 Kf6 3 Kg4 Ke5 4 Kh5 Kf4 5 Kg6 Kg4 6 K×g7 h5;

2 Kf4 Ke6! 3 Ke4 g6 4 Kf4 Kd5 5 Kf3 Ke5 6 Ke3 Kf5 7 Kf3 h5⊙. Note that with Black's pawn at g6, the opposition is important for both sides; with the pawn at g7, it is the anti-opposition that is important. This generalization is the mainspring driving this particular endgame.

2 Kf5 g6+ 3 Ke5 Ke7 4 Kd5 (4 h5 g5 5 Kf5 Kd6) 4…Kf6 5 Ke4 Ke6, etc.;

2 Kf3 g6! (Black seizes the distant opposition, and then converts it into close opposition, as usual, with an outflanking) 3 Ke3 Ke7! 4 Kf3 Kd6! 5 Ke4 Ke6, etc.

1…Ke7

1…Kf7 is met by 2 Kg4! Now 2…Kg6 3 h5+ would be useless; and after 2…Ke6 3 Kf4! White, as should be done in positions with the pawn at g7, gives up the opposition to his opponent (3…Kf6 4 h5= or 3…g6 4 Ke4=); while after 2…g6 he seizes the distant opposition with 3 Kf3! All that remains is 2…Kf6, but then White is saved by the unexpectedly direct 3 Kh5! Ke5 (3…Kf5 is stalemate) 4 Kg6 Kf4 5 K×g7 h5 6 Kf6! Kg4 7 Ke5 K×h4 8 Kf4=.

2 Kf3!

Of course not 2 Kf4? Ke6!–+.

2…Kf6

2…Ke6 3 Kf4!; 2…g6 3 Ke3!.

3 Ke4!

Still the same principle at work – with the pawn on g7, anti-opposition.

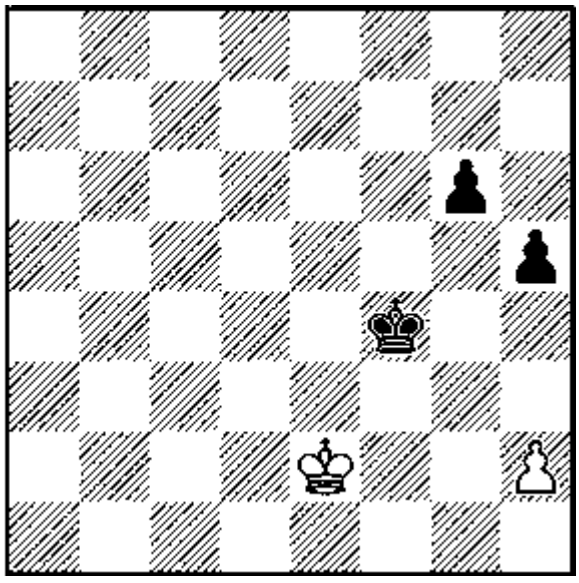
3…Kf7!? 4 Ke3! Ke7 5 Kf3!=.

Tragicomedies

Marshall – Schlechter

San Sebastian 1911

1-182



B?

1…Kg4! 2 Kf2 Kh3 decides: 3 Kg1 (White's king is on the wrong square: on h1, it would be a draw) 3…g5 4 Kh1 g4 5 Kg1 h4 6 Kh1 g3 7 hg hg 8 Kg1 g2–+.

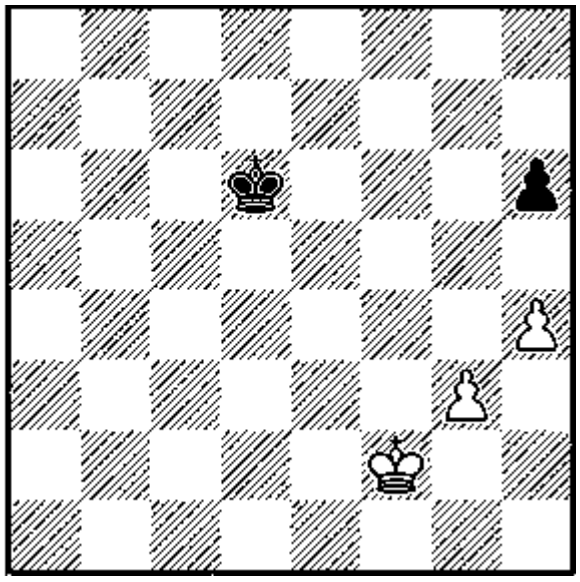
Instead, Schlechter played **1…Ke4??**, when the position was drawn, because both black pawns have now left their starting rank, and if Black tries to get his king into h3 (there is no other plan), White's king can always choose the right square on the first rank.

2 Kf2 Kd3 3 Kf3 g5 4 Kf2 Ke4 5 Ke2 Kf4 6 Kf2 Kg4 7 Kg2 h4 8 h3+ (the simplest, although 8 Kg1 was possible too) Draw.

Chiburdanidze – Watson

Brussels 1987

1-183



W

The position is almost the same as the Réti/Mandler study. White wins with either 1 g4! Ke6 2 Ke2! Kf6 3 Kd3, or 1 Ke3! Ke5 (1…Ke6 2 Kf4! Kf6 3 g4) 2 g4.

1 Kf3?? Ke7! 2 Kf4 Ke6! 3 g4 Kf6 4 Kf3 Ke7???

An awful blunder in return. As long as the pawn stood on g3, Black ceded his opponent the right to control the opposition. But now, with the pawn on g4, he cannot give the opposition up! 4…Kf7!= was necessary.

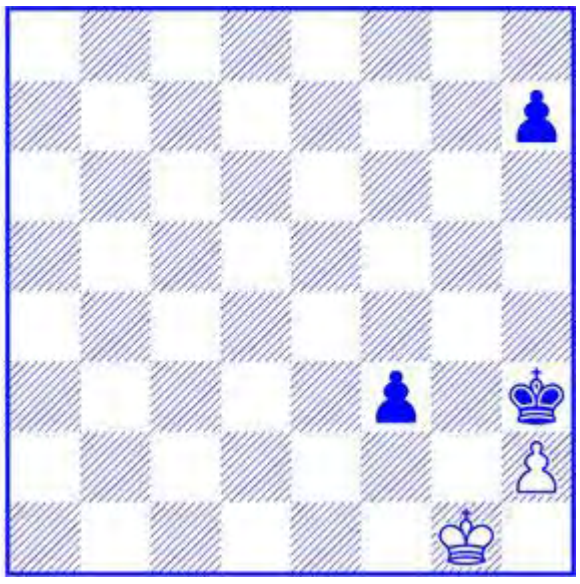
5 Ke3!Q **Kf7 6 Kd4! Kf6 7 Kd5 Ke7 8 Ke5 Kf7 9 Kf5 Kg7 10 Ke6 Kg6 11 h5+ Kg5 12 Kf7 K×g4 13 Kg6 Kf4 14 K×h6** Black resigned.

The f- and h-Pawns vs. the h-Pawn

We shall analyze the basic ideas of such positions by using the following study as an example.

N. Grigoriev, 1920

1-184



W?

If White plays 1 Kh1? (naively hoping for 1…f2?? stalemate), then after 1…Kg4, his position is lost. Black's plan is elementary: his king goes to e3, and then he advances …f3-f2, forcing the advance of White's h-pawn. The fact that Black can choose whether to move his h-pawn one or two squares forward allows him to place his opponent in zugzwang. For example: 2 Kg1 Kf4 3 Kf2 Ke4 4 Kf1 (4 Ke1 Ke3 5 Kf1 f2 6 h4 h5!) 4…Ke3 5 Ke1 f2+ 6 Kf1 Kf3! 7 h3 h5! 8 h4 Kg3, or 7 h4 h6! 8 h5 Kg3.

1 Kf2! Kg4 2 Ke3!⊙

Thanks to zugzwang, the pawn must leave the h7-square; the position is now a draw. White must only make sure he chooses the right back-rank square for his king (corresponding to the position of

Black's h-pawn).

2…h6 3 Kf2 Kf4 4 Ke1! Ke3

Or 4…h5 5 Kf2 Ke4 6 Kf1!.

5 Kf1 h5

5…f2 6 h3! Kf3 7 h4 Kg3 8 h5⊙=.

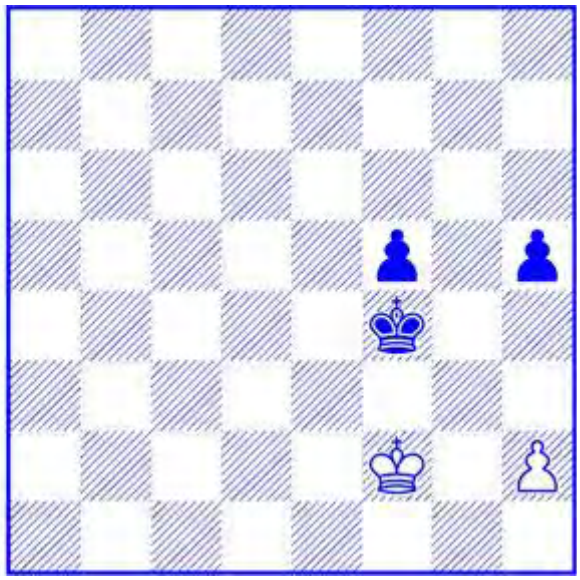
6 Ke1 f2+

6…h4 would be met by 7 Kf1! f2 8 h3=. But not the hasty 7 h3?, which would be a terrible blunder here, leading to the Fahrni-Alapin ending we know so well (from Diagram 1-27). Just a reminder: Black wins by triangulating with his king: 7…Ke4 8 Kf1 Ke5 9 Ke1 Kf5! 10 Kf1 Ke4⊙.

7 Kf1 Kf3 8 h3! Kg3 9 h4=

So the stronger side wins only if the rook's pawn is on the starting square. The only exception to this rule was found by Maizelis in 1955 (although it was seen even earlier, in a 1949 study by Valles).

1-185



Here, everything depends on whose turn it is to move. Black to move wins.

1…Ke4 2 Ke2 h4! (an exceptionally important position – reciprocal zugzwang!) **3 Kf2 Kd3!!**

Control of the opposition is exploited, as usual, by outflanking – although this time, a paradoxical one.

4 Kf3 h3!⊙ 5 Kf2

There is no help in either 5 Kf4 Ke2 6 K×f5 Kf3! or 5 Kg3 Ke3(e2) 6 K×h3 f4.

5…Kd2! 6 Kf3 (6 Kf1 Ke3 7 Ke1 Kf3 8 Kf1 f4 9 Kg1 Ke2–+) **6…Ke1 7 Ke3 Kf1 8 Kf3 Kg1 9 Kg3 f4+ 10 Kf3** (10 K×h3 f3) **10…K×h2 11 Kf2 f3⊙–+**

With White to move, there is no win: 1 Ke2 Ke4 2 Kf2 h4 (2…Kd3 3 Kf3 h4 4 Kf4 Ke2 5 K×f5=) 3 Ke2⊙ h3 4 Kf2 Kd3 5 Kf3 Kd2 6 Kf2!=.

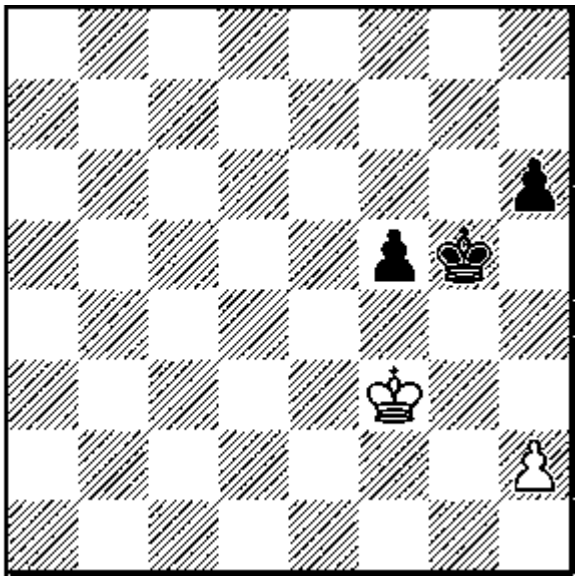
Maizelis' position serves as a most important guidepost in analyzing situations where one side has an advanced rook's pawn – the outcome of the battle depends on whether the stronger side can reach Maizelis' position and whose move it is.

Maizelis studied the following position, and considered it lost. His conclusion would appear to be supported by the result of this game.

Vaganian – Sunye Neto

Rio de Janeiro izt 1979

1-186



W?

1 Kg3 h5! 2 Kf3 (on 2 Kg2, Black should play 2…Kf4!, and if 2 Kf2, then 2…Kg4! 3 Ke3 Kh3, or 3 Kg2 h4) 2…h4 3 Kg2 Kg4! 4 Kf2 Kf4 5 Ke2 Ke4 (White is in zugzwang) 6 Kf2 Kd3!! 7 Kf3 h3! White resigned.

I was in Rio de Janeiro. Unfamiliar with Maizelis' analysis, and astounded that Black could win such a position, I focused on it intensely and quickly found the saving line. Pal Benko (who was Sunye Neto's second at the Interzonal) came to the same conclusion a bit earlier.

Since the central problem here is one of reciprocal zugzwang, let's analyze the corresponding squares. If Black's king moves to the fourth rank with the pawn at h4 or h6, White's king must respond by taking the opposition. If the pawn is at h5, the opposite is true – White must take the anti-opposition.

This means that neither 1 Kg2? Kg4! nor 1 Kf2? Kf4! is good. And we have already seen what happens to 1 Kg3? So:

1 Ke2!! Kg4

After 1…Kf4 2 Kf2, White is in fine shape – he has the opposition with the pawn at h6. The game might continue 2…h5 3 Ke2 Ke4 4 Kf2 h4 (with the pawn at h5, the outflanking 4…Kd3 does not work) 5 Ke2=. If 1…h5, then either 2 Ke3 or 2 Kf1.

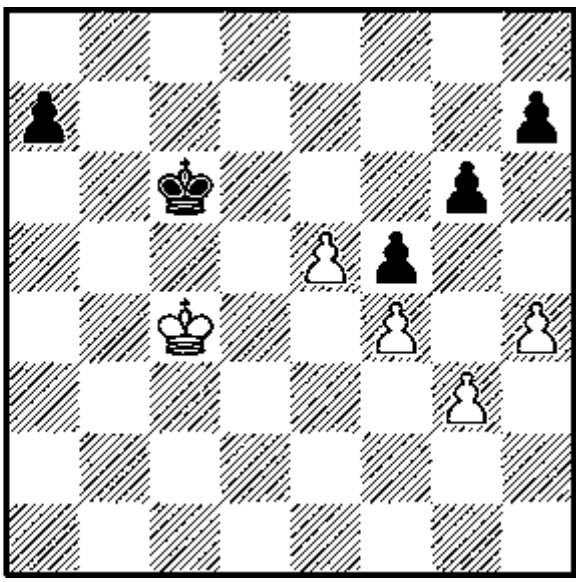
2 Ke3! h5 (2…Kh3 3 Kf4) **3 Kf2**

The goal is reached: White has the antiopposition, with the pawn at h5.

3…Kf4 4 Ke2 Ke4 5 Kf2 h4 6 Ke2⊙=.

The following exceptionally complex example was first given in Fine's book (1941), but unfortunately with completely erroneous analysis. Maizelis (1956) did a much better job on the position; and later his conclusions were refined and extended by other authors.

1-187



W

Here we have a protected passed pawn versus an outside passed pawn. Since White cannot win the a-pawn, he will have to trade it for his e-pawn. But what does this leave us with?

1 Kb4

Or 1 Kd4 Kc7 2 Kc5 a6 3 Kc4 Kc8 (but not 3…Kc6? 4 Kd4⊙) 4 Kb4 Kb8 5 Ka5 Kb7.

1…Kb6

Black cannot close up the kingside with 1…h5, since then the trade of pawns will give White an easy win: 2 Ka5 Kb7 3 Kb5 Kc7 4 Ka6 Kb8 5 e6 Kc7 6 K×a7 Kd6 7 Kb6 K×e6 8 Kc6 (taking the lateral opposition decides) 8…Ke7 9 Kc7 Ke6 10 Kd8 (outflanking) 10…Kd5 (10…Kf7 11 Kd7 Kf6 12 Ke8 Kg7 13 Ke7 Kh7 14 Kf7 Kh6 15 Kg8⊙) 11 Ke7 Ke4 12 Kf6 Kf3 13 K×g6 K×g3 14 Kg5!⊙.

2 Ka4 a5

Equally good is 2…Kc6 3 Ka5 Kc7 4 Ka6 Kb8. Fine only examined 2…a6? 3 Kb4 Kc6 4 Kc4 Kb6 (4…a5 5 Kd4!) 5 Kd5! and White either queens his pawn or wins the pawn on a6.

3 h5!

Before exchanging pawns, it is necessary first to weaken the enemy kingside pawn chain. Because it is zugzwang, Black has no choice:

3…gh 4 e6! Kc6 5 K×a5 Kd6 6 Kb6 K×e6

The pawn at f5 must fall. But if Black replies to the capture of the pawn with 1…h4 2 gh Ke7, he will draw, because this will lead to Maizelis' position with White in zugzwang. But if the pawn is captured instead with the king at either e7 or g7, Black is the one in zugzwang, and he loses. So this is what the further course of the struggle will be about.

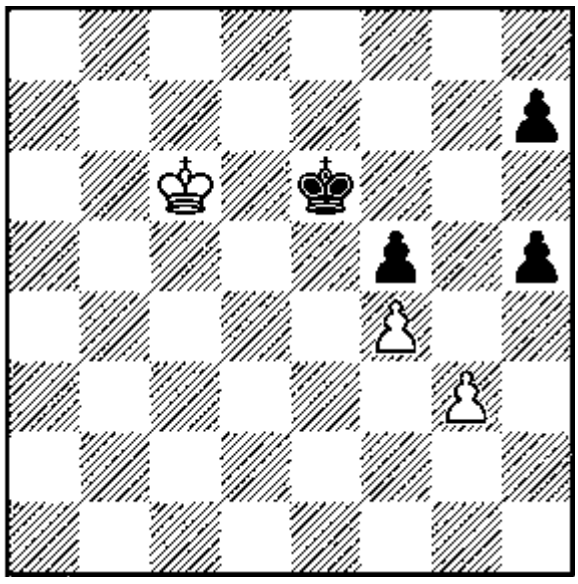
This conclusion allows us to discover the corresponding squares e5 and f7, d5 and e7(g7). Continuing this analysis, we find more corresponding squares: e6 and g6(e8), f6 and f8.

7 Kc6!

But not 7 Kc5? Kd7! (7…Kf7!) 8 Kd5 Ke7 9 Ke5 Kf7 10 K×f5 h4 11 gh Ke7 12 Ke5 Kf7 13 h5 Ke7⊙=.

1-188

B



7…Kf7!

The most stubborn defense, pointed out by Euwe and Hooper (1958). Things are simpler for White after 7…Ke7 8 Kd5 Kf6 9 Kd6 Kf7 10 Ke5 Kg6 11 Ke6 Kg7 12 K×f5 h4 13 gh Kf7 14 Ke5 Ke7 15 h5⊙+–.

But now, since 8 Kd5? Ke7! (8…Kg7!) and 8 Kd6? Kf6 9 Kd5 Ke7(g7)! do not work, there remains but one move:

8 Kd7! Kf8 9 Kd6!!

9 Ke6? would be a mistake: 9…Ke8 10 Kf6 h4 (10…Kf8 11 Kg5 h4! 12 K×h4 h6 is also possible, or 12 gh Kf7!) 11 gh Kf8 12 h5 (12 K×f5 Ke7!) 12…Kg8 13 K×f5 Kf7!=.

9…Kg7 10 Ke7! Kg8

10…Kg6 11 Ke6 Kg7 12 K×f5 h4 13 gh Kf7 14 Ke5 Ke7 15 h5⊙+–.

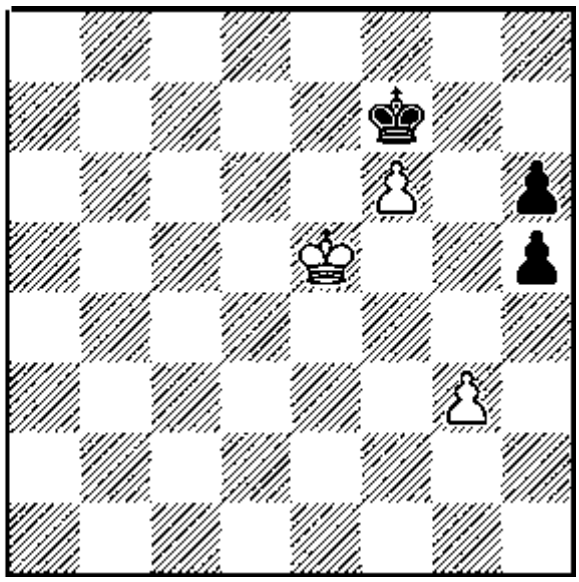
11 Ke6! Kf8 12 Kf6⊙ Kg8 13 K×f5 h4 14 gh

White has achieved his aim – the enemy king cannot go to e7 now.

14…Kf7 15 Ke5 Ke7 16 h5!⊙ Kf7 17 Kd6!! Kf6 18 h6!, Etc.

The only defense left to examine involves Black holding on to both h-pawns: 10…Kg6 11 Ke6 h6 12 Ke5 Kg7 13 K×f5 Kf7 14 Ke5 Ke7 15 f5 Kf7 16 f6.

1-189



B

With the pawn pushed up to h6, 16…h4 17.gh is now useless: at a minimum, White gets the winning position from the game Fahrni-Alapin. On the other hand, we have practically the same situation on the board now – the only difference being that the e6-square, as is easily seen, corresponds to f8, not e8; and that means the e5-square corresponds to e8. So the familiar triangulation decides.

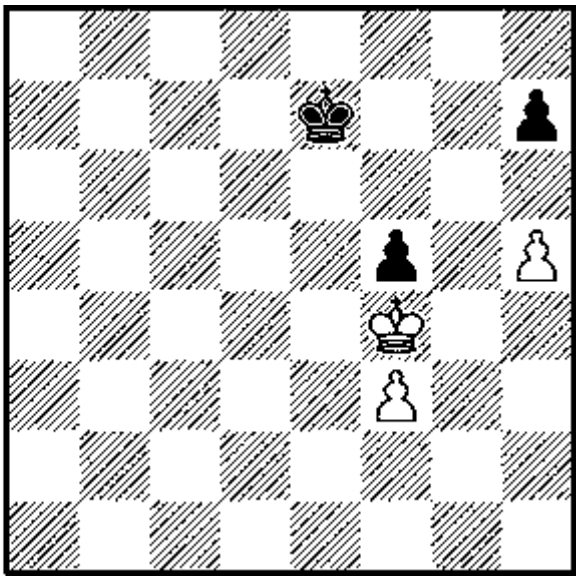
16…Ke8! 17 Kf4 Kf8 18 Ke4! Ke8 19 Ke5!⊙ Kf8 (19…Kf7 20 Kf5) 20 Ke6 Ke8 21 f7+ Kf8 22 Kf6⊙ h4 23 gh h5 24 Kg6+–.

Tragicomedies

Azmaiparashvili – Eolian

USSR ch tt 1979

1-190



W?

1 Kg5??

White wins by 1 K×f5! Kf7 2 f4 Ke7 3 Ke5⊙ Kf7 4 Kd6!!

1…Kf8 2 K×f5 Kf7??

2…Ke7! 3 f4 Kf7=

3 Kg4??

The comedy of errors continues! Of course, either 3 f4 or 3 Ke5 was correct.

3…Kf6??

The king steps upon a mined square – one he should only have gone to after f3-f4. Black draws after either 3…Ke6! (4 Kg5 Kf7!; 4 f4 Kf6!), or 3…Kf8!

4 Kf4

4 f4!⊙ was simpler: next move, the white king advances, seizing the opposition. For example: 4…Ke7 5 Kg5! Kf7 (5…Ke6 6 Kh6) 6 Kf5, etc.

4…Kf7?!

4…Ke6!? would not have helped, in view of 5 Kg4!⊙ (5 Kg5? Kf7=) 5…Kf6 (5…Ke7 6 Kf5!) 6 f4!+–.

5 Kf5??

And once again, White misses the opportunity: 5 Ke5! Ke7 6 f4⊙+–.

5…Ke7 6 Ke5 Kf7 7 Kd6 Kf6 8 Kd7 Kf7

Black also draws after 8…Kg5 (or 8…Kf5 9 Ke7 Kg5!) 9 Ke6 h6!⊙ 10 Ke5 K×h5 11 f4 Kg6 12 Ke6 Kg7! 13 Ke7 Kg6 (the pendulum).

9 h6 (9 f4 Kf6 10 Ke8 Kf5 11 Kf7 K×f4 12 Kg7 Kf5 13 K×h7 Kf6=) **9…Kg6! 10 f4** (10 Ke6 K×h6 11 f4 Kg7 12 Ke7 Kg6!= – the pendulum) **10…Kf7!**⊙ (10…K×h6? 11 f5+–) **11 f5 Kf6** Draw

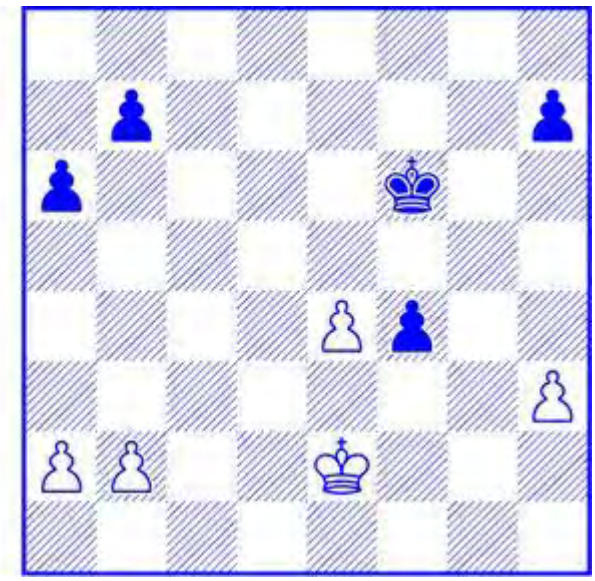
This example demonstrates how senseless the play of both sides can seem when they are unacquainted with the ideas behind a position.

Both Sides Have Reserve Tempi

In many cases, it is not hard to establish the number of reserve tempi available for both sides (as it was, for example in the ending Kachiani-Maric, from Diagram 1-174). However, there are far more complex situations as well.

Šveida – Sika
Brno 1929

1-191



Steinitz's rule tells us that, as far as reserve tempi go, White stands better on the queenside, while Black is better on the kingside. The following bit of advice will help you select the optimal strategy for such situations: ***Try to equalize, as quickly as possible, the situation on your "unfavorable" side.***

Whoever has the move in the above position will succeed in executing the principle outlined above, and will win.

Let's suppose it is Black to move.

1…Ke5 2 Kf3 a5!

The pawns retaining the right to move either one or two squares should be left alone.

3 h4

3 a4 h6! and 3 b3 b5! 4 h4 b4 5 h5 h6 are no better.

3…a4 4 h5 h6 5 b4 ab (5…a3 6 b5 b6) **6 ab b6! 7 b4 b5**–+

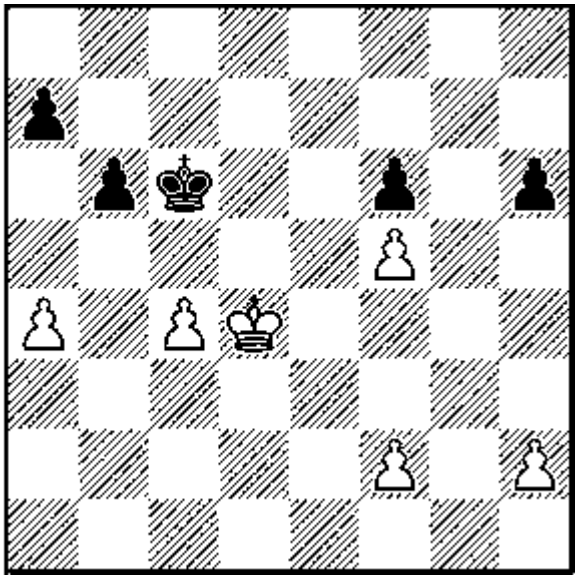
Now let's see what happens with White to move.

1 Kf3 Ke5 2 h4! (but not 2 b4? h6!) **2…a5 3 h5 a4** (3…h6 4 a4) **4 h6! b6** (4…a3 5 ba b5 6 a4 ba 7 a3) **5 b4! ab** (5…a3 6 b5) **6 ab b5 7 b4⊙ Ke6** (7…Kf6 8 K×f4 Kg6 9 Ke5! K×h6 10 Kf6+–) **8 K×f4 Kf6 9 e5+ Kg6 10 Ke4 K×h6 11 Kd5 Kg7 12 Kd6 h5 13 e6**+–.

Tragicomedies

Draško – Vratonjic
Yugoslavia tt 1997

1-192



W

1 f4??

An awful move! Without any need, White gives away two reserve tempi. The obvious drawing line was 1 Kd3 Kc5 2 Kc3 h5 3 h4 a6 4 f3 a5 5 f4=.

1…Kd6 2 Kd3 Kc5 3 Kc3 h5 4 Kb3 (4 h4 a5⊙) **4…h4 5 Kc3 h3 6 Kb3 a6**

After 6…Kd4? 7 Kb4 a6 8 a5! ba+ 9 K×a5 K×c4 10 K×a6 Kd4, White's king is just in time to get back to the kingside: 11 Kb5 Ke4 12 Kc4 K×f5 13 Kd3 K×f4 14 Ke2=.

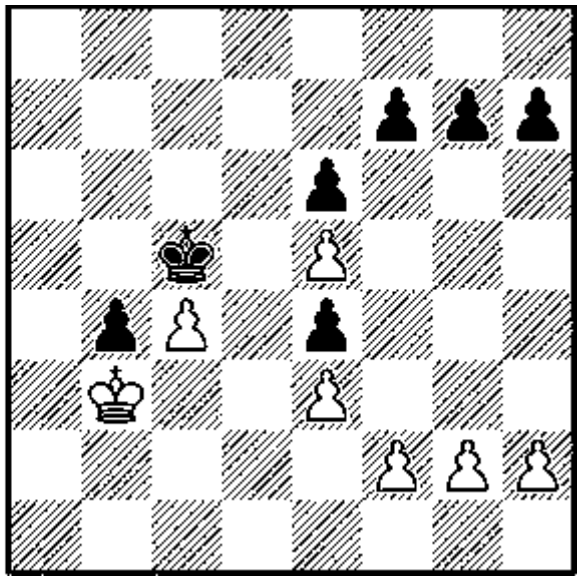
7 a5 (7 Kc3 a5⊙–+) **7…ba 8 Ka4 K×c4 9 K×a5 Kd4 10 K×a6 Ke4 11 Kb5 K×f5** White resigned.

With the following difficult, but beautiful example, I wish to close this chapter devoted to pawn endgames. The comments are based on those of Lindgren in *Informant* 74.

Laveryd – Wikström
Umeå 1997

1-193

B?



How should this game end?

On the queenside, the two kings have already occupied the mined squares b3 and c5. It would seem that the side (let's say, Black) that first runs out of pawn moves will lose. So the correct answer – that the position is a draw – appears paradoxical.

The first question is: How is Black to avoid losing immediately? For 1…f6? (or 1…f5?) is completely hopeless in view of 2 ef gf 3 g4!

1…h5!

It turns out that, after the natural 2 h4?, it is not White who places his opponent in zugzwang – he falls into it himself: 2…g5! 3 hg h4⊙.

By the way, this example fully deserves to be placed in "Tragicomedies," since the actual continuation was 1…h6?? 2 h3?? (2 g4! g6 3 h4+–; or 2…f5 3 ef gf 4 h4+–) 2…h5!–+ 3 h4 g5! 4 g3 g4, and White resigned.

2 h3!

The only move! We already know that 2 h4? does not work; and 2 f4? ef 3 gf h4 4 h3 f6 (or 4…f5) and 2 g3? f6 (2…f5) are both bad. But now, Black once again faces a tough defensive task.

2…g5? loses at once to 3 g3, and 2…f5? to 3 h4. No better is 2…h4 3 g3! hg (3…g5 4 g4) 4 fg f5 5 ef gf 6 h4. And 2…g6? is elegantly refuted by 3 g4! (but not by 3 h4? g5!) 3…hg 4 h4!

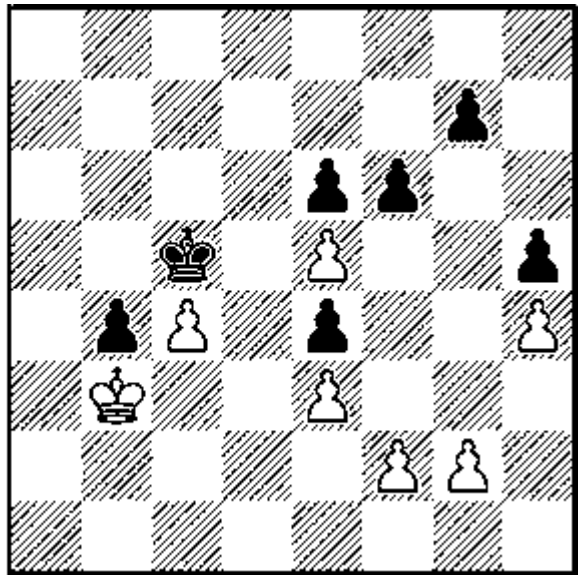
So there is only one move left.

2…f6! 3 h4!

Of course not 3 ef? gf; and it is not difficult to see that White is the one in zugzwang. But now what does Black do?

1-194

B?



3…fe is met by 4 g4!; and if 3…f5, then 4 f4! ef 5 gf g5 (5…f4 6 ef g6 7 f5) 6 hg h4 7 g6 h3 8 g7 h2 9 g8Q h1Q 10 Qf8+ Kc6 11 Qd6+, with an easily won queen endgame.

One must have an unusual gift for the fantastic (or know some of Grigoriev's studies) to find the idea of a stalemate haven in the middle of the board! **3…fe! 4 g4! g6!** (4…hg? 5 h5+–) **5 g5 Kb6!** (5…Kd6!) **6 K×b4 Kc6 7 c5 Kd5!! 8 Kb5** stalemate.

Chapter 2

Knight vs. Pawns

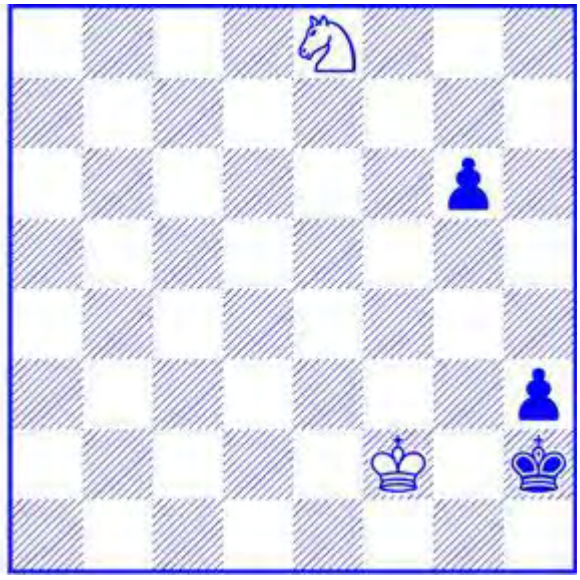
King in the Corner

Mate

If the defender’s king is trapped in the corner, sometimes even a lone knight is able to mate.

A. Salvio, 1634

2-1



White to move wins by 1 Nf6 Kh1 2 Ng4 g5 3 Kf1⊙ h2 4 Nf2#. But even with Black to move, the game lasts only a little longer.

1…Kh1

1…g5 2 Nf6 g4 3 N×g4+ Kh1 4 Kf1⊙ h2 5 Nf2#.

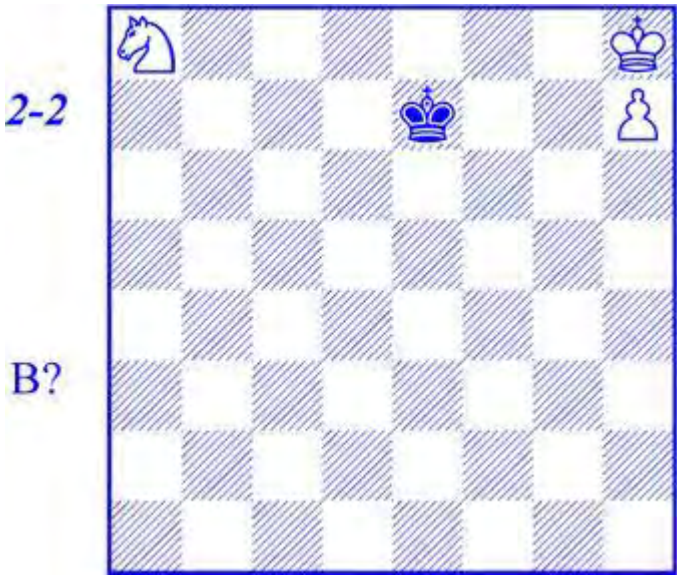
2 Nf6 Kh2

2…h2 3 Ng4 g5 4 Ne3! g4 5 Nf1 g3+ 6 N×g3#; 2…g5 3 Ng4⊙ h2 4 Ne3!.

3 Ng4+ Kh1 4 Kf1 g5 5 Kf2⊙ h2 6 Ne3 g4 7 Nf1 g3+ 8 N×g3#.

Drawn Positions

Knight and pawn win easily against a lone king (that is, of course, so long as the pawn is not lost). But there are exceptions.



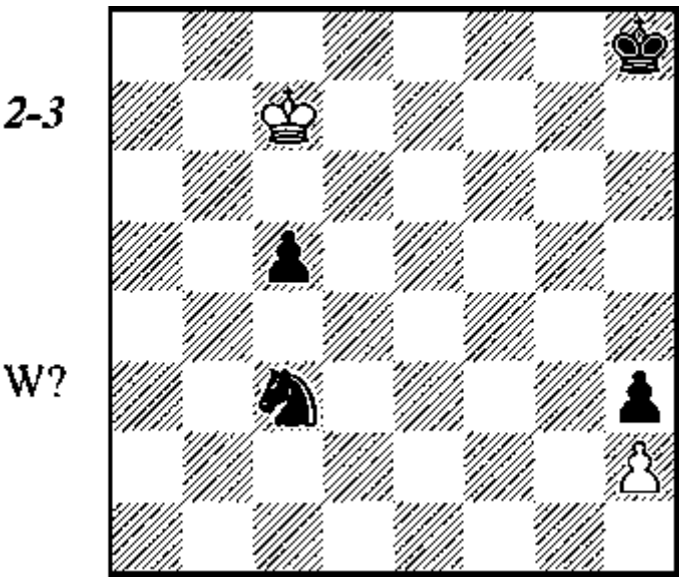
Black saves himself by squeezing the opposing king in the corner. He must only be careful to choose the correct square for his king. 1…Kf8? loses after 2 Nc7 Kf7 3 Ne6⊙.

1…Kf7! 2 Nc7 Kf8 3 Ne6+ Kf7=

It is useful to note that ***the knight (unlike the other the pieces) cannot "lose" a move in order to give the move to the opponent*** – the knight cannot triangulate.

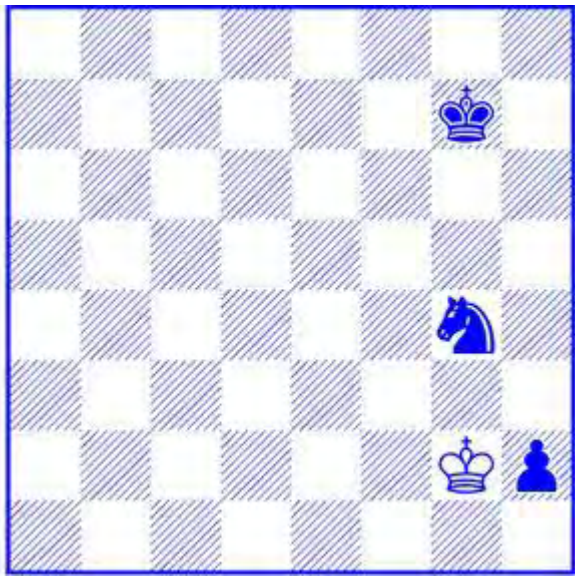
We shall learn about other drawing situations by analyzing the following example:

V. Chekhover, 1952*



1 Kc6! (1 Kd6? Na4–+; 1 Kb6? Ne4–+) 1…Ne4 2 Kd5 Ng5 3 K×c5 Nf3 4 Kd5! N×h2 5 Ke4 Ng4 6 Kf3 Kg7 7 Kg3 h2 8 Kg2

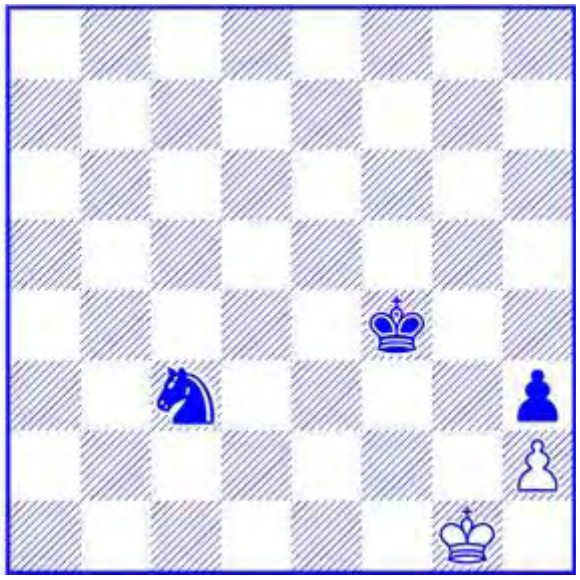
2-4



We may conclude that ***in those cases where the pawn has gone too far (in other words, to the next-to-last rank), the position is drawn.*** The knight could also be at f1 (5…Kg7 6 Kf4 Nf1 7 Kf3 Kg6 8 Kf2 h2 9 Kg2) without affecting the outcome.

Another try for Black is: 1…Kg7 2 K×c5 Kf6 3 Kd4 Nd1 4 Kd3 Kf5 5 Ke2 Nc3+ 6 Kf2 Kf4 7 Kg1

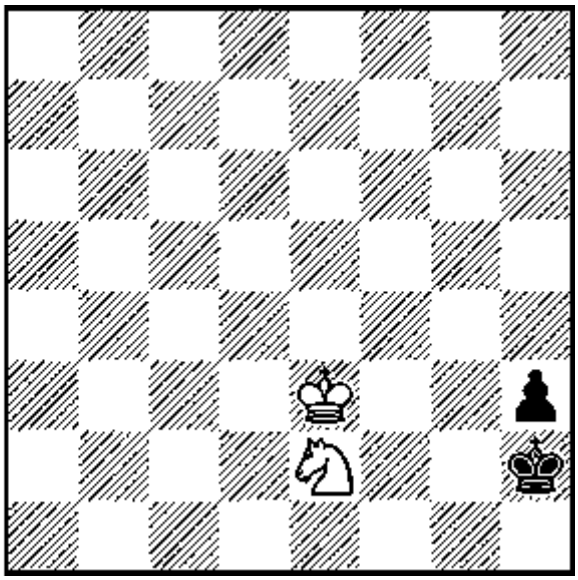
2-5



It is impossible either to drive the king from the corner or to mate it – the best Black can achieve is stalemate.

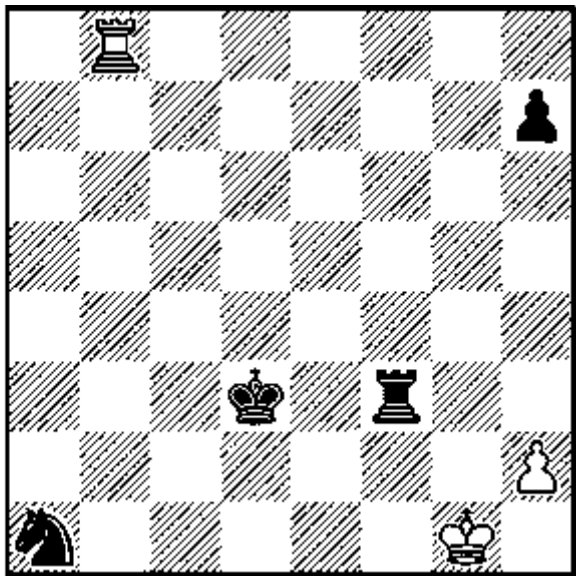
Exercises

2-6



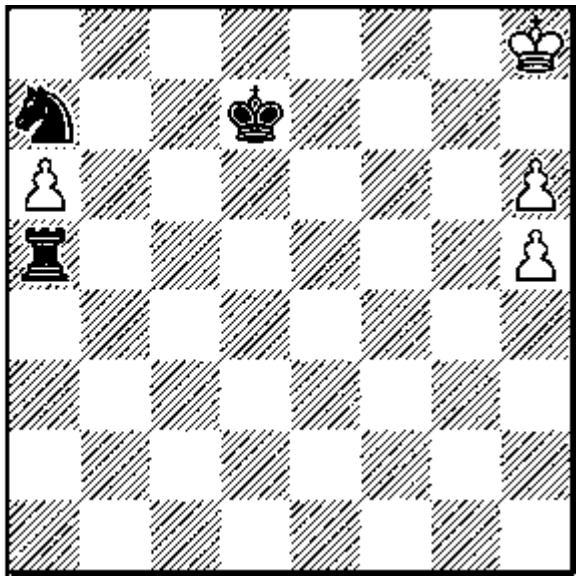
2/1
W?

2-7



2/2
W?

2-8



2/3
W?/Play

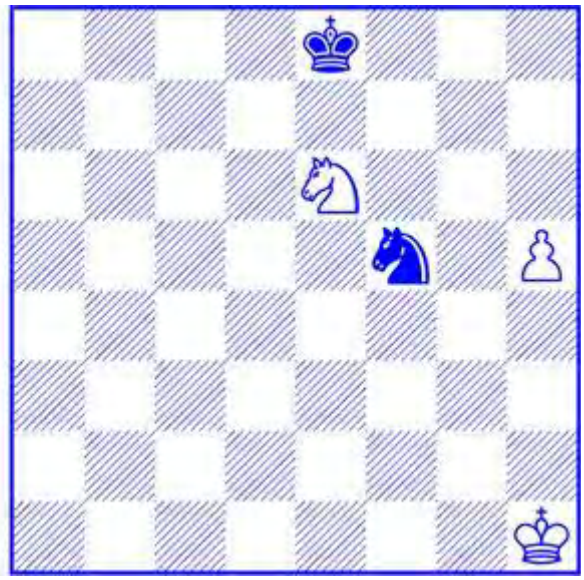
Knight vs. Rook's Pawn

The closer the passed pawn to the edge of the board, the more difficulty the knight has dealing with it. The rook pawns are especially dangerous. Here is a simple, yet instructive example.

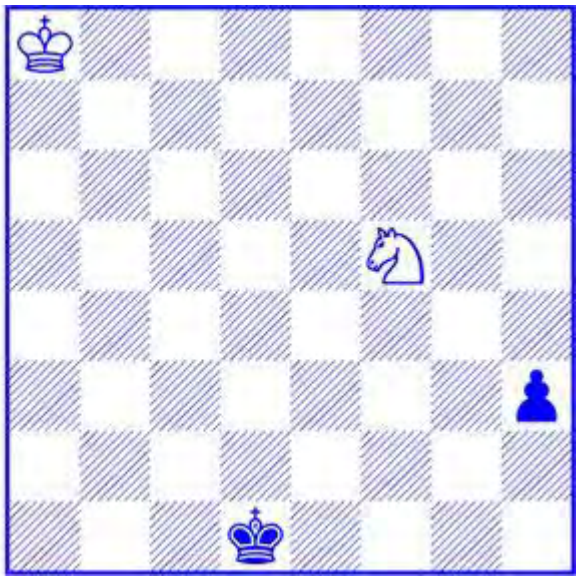
1 Ng7+! N×g7 2 h6 Kf7 3 h7+–.

Note, that with White's king at g2, the position would be drawn: the pawn is stopped after, for instance, 2…Ne6 3 h7 Nf4+ and 4…Ng6. ***In many instances, the knight can win the necessary tempo with a check to the enemy king.***

A. Chéron, 1952



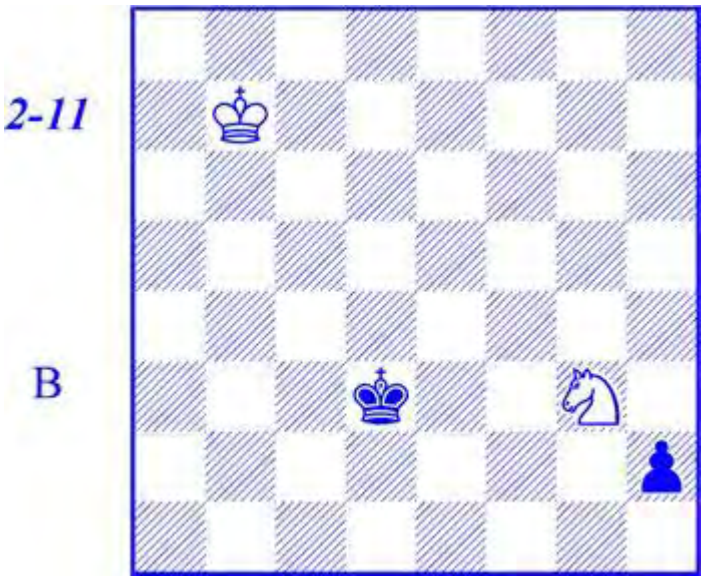
The knight can hold a rook pawn without the king's help, if it "touches" any square in the pawn's path, except the final, corner square.



1 Ng3? h2 2 Kb7 Ke1 3 Kc6 Kf2 is hopeless. The knight should aim for h2, not h1.
1 Ne3+! Ke2 2 Ng4 Kf3 3 Nh2+ Kg2 4 Ng4 Kg3 5 Ne3! Kf3 (5…h2 6 Nf1+) **6 Nf1**, etc.

I should also point out that even with the knight in the corner, the position is certainly not always hopeless. True, the knight can no longer deal with the pawn by itself; but sometimes the king can come to its rescue in time.

In the starting position, let's move the black king to d3. Now the knight cannot get to h2 (1 Nh6? h2 2 Ng4 h1Q+; the pawn queens with check). So White has to play 1 Ng3 (threatening 2 Nf1) 1…h2 2 Kb7.



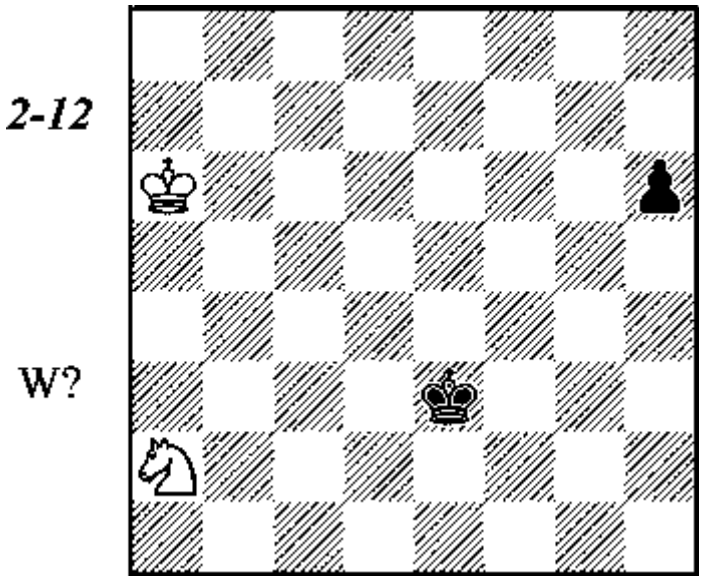
The knight has set up a ***barrier*** against the enemy king, which not only cannot cross the e2- and e4-squares, but also is denied e3 and d2 (because of the forking Nf1+). ***Knight forks are a vital technique in knight endgames.***

In order to attack the knight, the king will have to lose time with the outflanking …Kc2-d1-e1-f2, or …Kd4-e5-f4.

2…Kd4 3 Kc6 Ke5 4 Kc5 Kf4 5 Nh1 Kf3 6 Kd4 Kg2 7 Ke3 K×h1 8 Kf2=.

2…Kc2 3 Kc6 Kd1 4 Kd5 Ke1 5 Ke4 Kf2 6 Kf4= (or 6 Nh1+ Kg2 6 Ke3=).

N. Grigoriev, 1932



The knight goes after the h-pawn, while the black king stands athwart his path. Which side will win out?

1 Nb4! h5 2 Nc6!

2 Nd5+? Kf3! 3 Nc7 h4 4 Ne6 Kg4! loses for White.

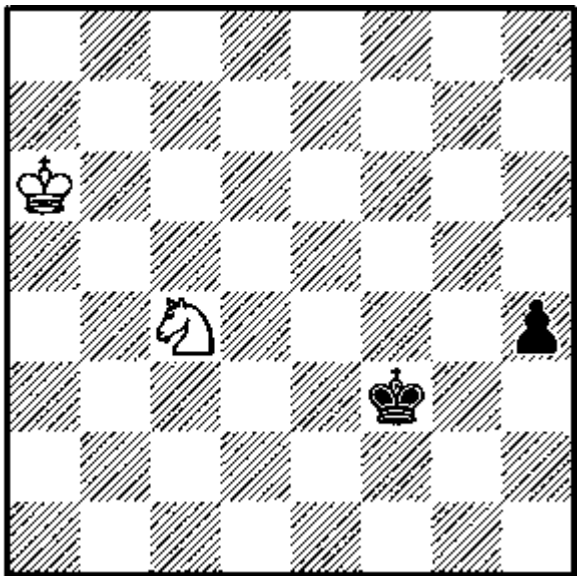
2…Ke4!

Certainly not 2…h4? 3 Ne5 h3 (3…Kf4 4 Ng6+ and 5 N×h4) 4 Ng4+ Kf4 5 Nh2=. ***The king restricts the knight best from a distance of one square diagonally (and also two squares away on a file or a rank).*** This generalization may be illustrated by the variation 3 Nd8? h4 4 Ne6 Kf5! 5 Nd4+ Kg4–+.

3 Na5!! h4 4 Nc4 (4 Nb3? Ke3) **4…Kf3!?** (4…h3 5 Nd2+ Ke3 6 Nf1+)

2-13

W?



One last little task: to choose between 5 Nd2+ and 5 Ne5+. On 5 Nd2+? Black responds 5…Ke2! (5…Kg2? 6 Nc4! h3 7 Ne3+) 6 Ne4 h3 7 Ng3+ Kf2 – and since the knight cannot reach the h2-square, White loses.

5 Ne5+! Kg3

On 5…Kf4 White plays 6 Ng6+, while other retreats allow the knight to get to g4.

6 Nc4! h3 7 Ne3=

It is interesting that the only way to refute 2 Nc2+? (instead of 2 Nc6!) is by 2…Kf2! The natural reply 2…Ke4? allows White the same sort of saving maneuver as in the main variation: 3 Na3! h4 (3…Kd3 4 Kb5! h4 5 Nc4 h3 6 Ne5+) 4 Nc4=.

Let's think about the strategic basis for White's saving plan. His knight goes to the h2-square via g4 or f1. Each of those routes individually might be interdicted by the king. The c4-square is key, because both routes intersect here: c4-e5-g4 and c4-d2-f1. Black cannot prevent the double threat.

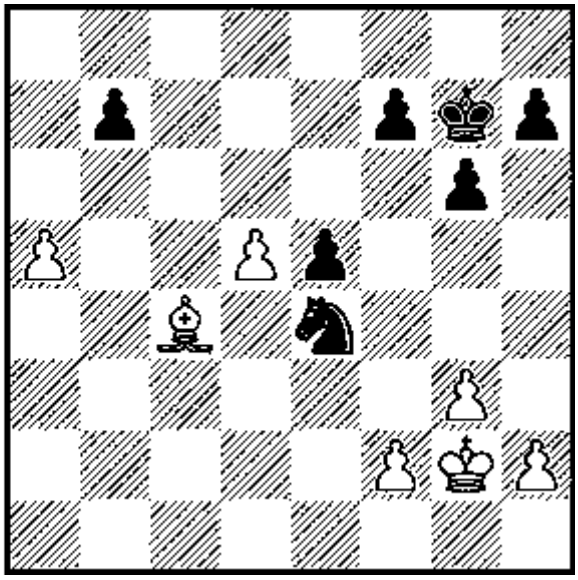
Double attack is one of the most effective methods of struggle in chess. Along with tactical double attacks (such as knight forks), it is important to learn the use of "strategic double attacks" as well – moves which further two (or more) goals simultaneously.

In addition to the study we have just examined, this strategy might also be illustrated by some of the pawn endgames examined earlier, such as Weenink's position (Diagram 1-15) or B. Neuenschwander's position (Diagram 1-31).

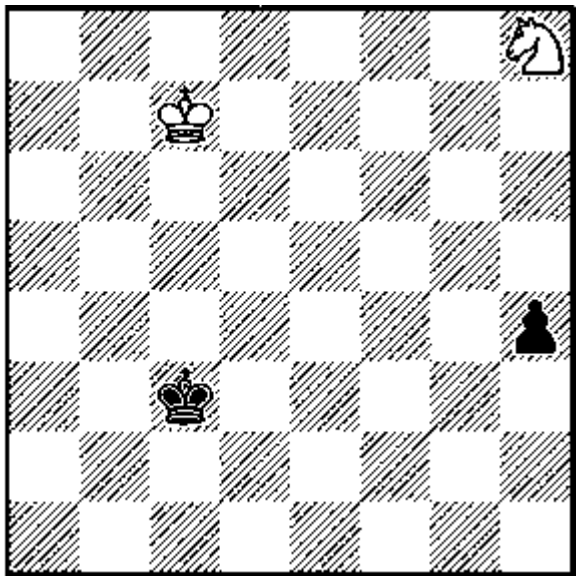
Exercises

2-14

2/4
W?

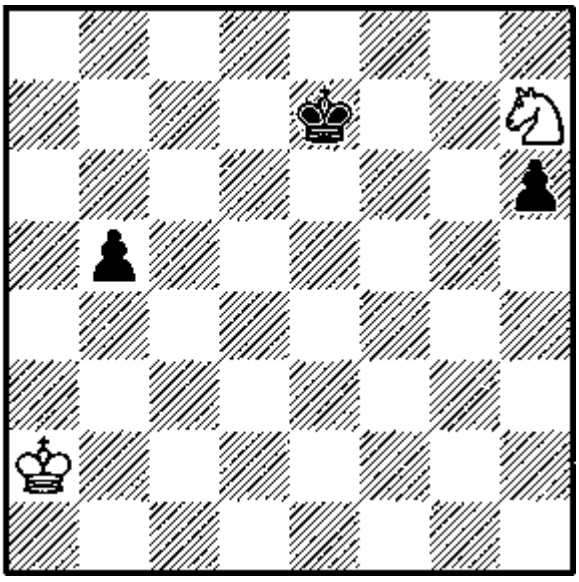


2-15



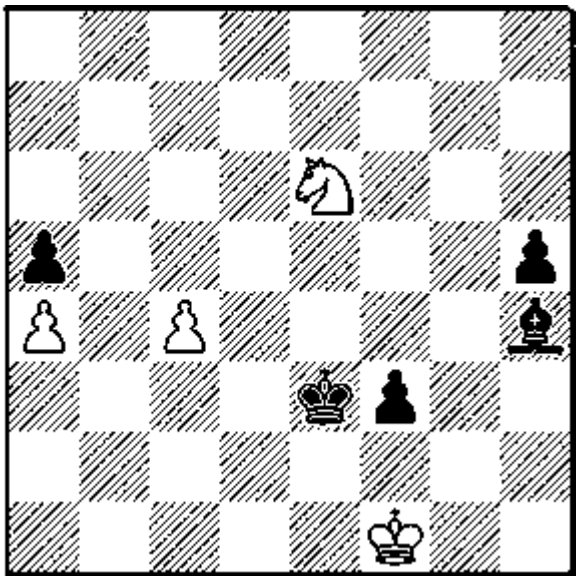
2/5
W?

2-16



2/6
W?

2-17



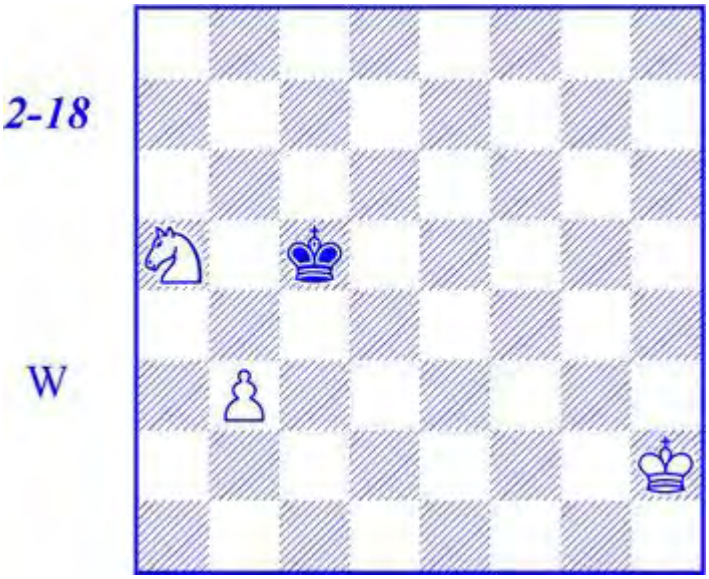
2/7
W?

The Knight Defends the Pawn

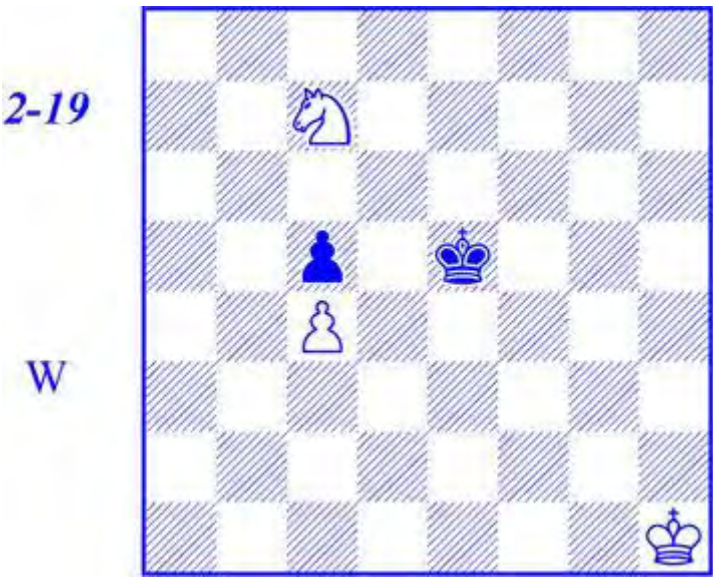
The best way for the knight to defend the passed pawn is from the rear. Here, the knight is immune from capture, since that would put the king outside the square of the passed pawn.

White parries the threat of 1…Kb4 with **1 Nc4! Kb4 2 Nd2 Kc3 3 Kg3**+–.

The knight can easily defend its pawn if both white and black pawns are on the same file, and the pawns blockade one another.



M. Dvoretsky, 2000



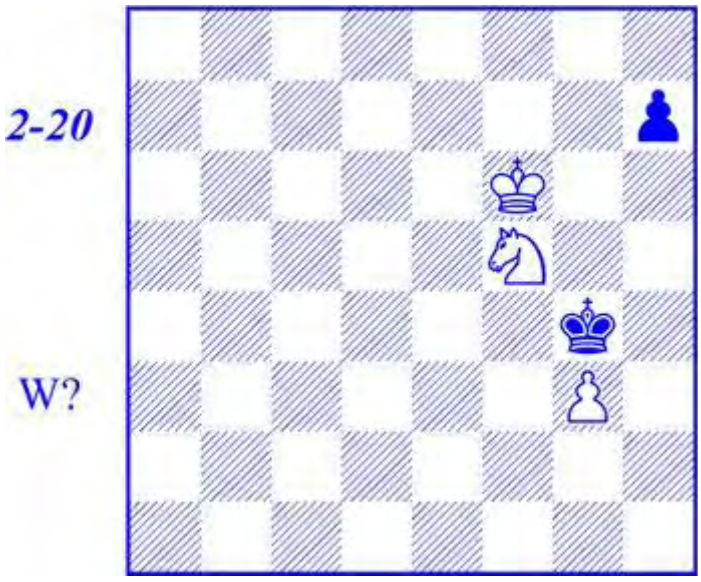
White can play either **1 Nb5 Ke4 2 Kg2 Kd3 3 Nd6,** or **1 Nd5 Kd4 2 Nb6** – in either case, the knight can handle it, without the king's assistance.

Let's move the pawn to c3. White's task is now more complex. He only gets a draw out of 1 Kg2? Ke4 2 Kg3 Kd3 3 Nb5(d5) Kc4, or 1 Nb5? Kd5 (1…Ke4? 2 c4) 2 Na3 Ke4 3 Kg2 Kd3 4 c4 Kc3 5 Kf3 Kb3 6 Ke4 K×a3 (here, if the king were on e5, White would win with 7 Kd6). But there is a solution: **1 Na8! Kd5** (1…Ke4 2 c4) **2 Nb6+ Kc6 3 Nc4 Kd5**, and now the simplest is **4 Nd2**+– (the barrier)

Understandably, if we moved the starting position one file to the left, there would be no win.

If White must defend the knight with his king, then the wins come far less often. Sometimes, we get a position of reciprocal zugzwang.

Ebralidze – Bondarevsky
USSR ch, Tbilisi 1937



1 Ke5!

Seizing the opposition is important when the black pawn is at h5 – consequently, it follows that with the pawn at h7, White needs the anti-opposition. In the actual game, White erred, missing the win: 1 Ke6? Kg5! 2 Ke5 h5 3 Ke6 (3 Ke4 Kg4) 3…Kg6! 4 Ne3 Kg5. Draw, in view of 5 Ke5 h4 6 g4 h3.

1…Kg5

Other moves do not help either:

1…h5 2 Kf6 (or 2 Ke4);

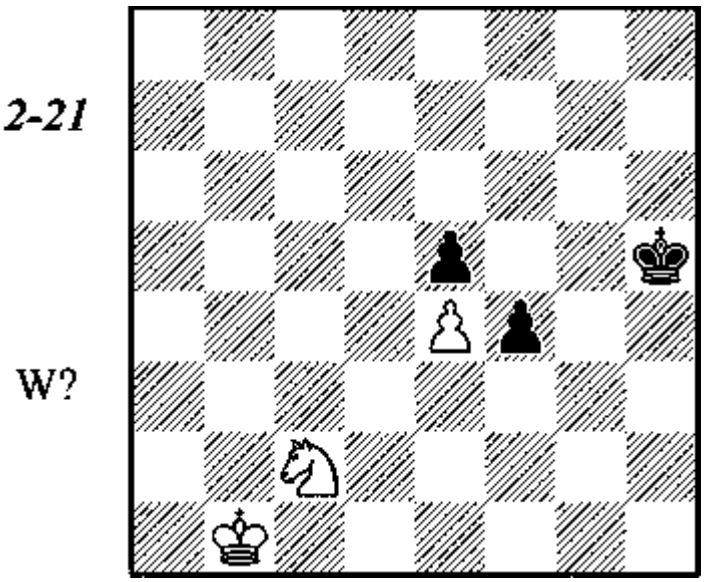
1…h6 2 Kf6! Kh5 3 N×h6! K×h6 4 g4;

1…Kf3 2 Ke6! Kg4 3 Kf6⊙ (the king triangulates) 3…Kh5 (3…h5 4 Kg6) 4 Ne3.

2 Ne3 h5 3 Ke4 (3 Nf5) **3…h4 4 g4 h3 5 Kf3**+–.

And now I offer for your enjoyment, the analysis of a very deep and elegant study.

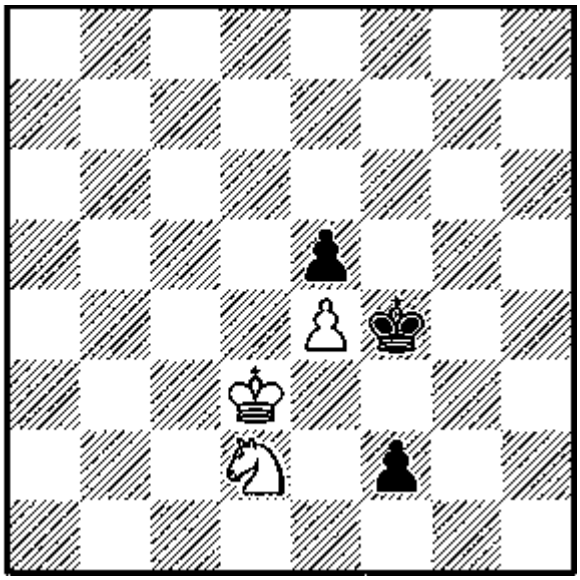
D. Blundell, 1995



Let’s first examine White’s most natural plan: approaching the pawns with his king.

1 Kc1? Kg4 2 Kd2 f3 3 Ne3+ (3 Ke3 f2! 4 K×f2 Kf4=) 3…Kf4 4 Kd3 f2 5 Nf1 Kf3 6 Nd2+ Kf4!

2-22



W

We have reached the reciprocal zugzwang position fundamental to this endgame. Black to move loses (7…Kg3 8 Ke2). But it is White's move here, and 7 Ke2 is met by 7…f1Q+! 8 K×f1 Ke3 9 Ke1 Kd3 10 Kd1 Ke3 11 Kc2 Kd4=.

Let's try 1 Na3? f3 2 Nc4. Now the natural 2…Kg4? leads to a loss: 3 Kc2 Kg3 4 Kc3!⊙ Kg4 (4…f2 5 Nd2 Kf4 6 Kd3⊙+–; 4…Kf4 5 Kd3 f2 6 Nd2⊙+–) 5 N×e5+! Kf4 6 Kd4.

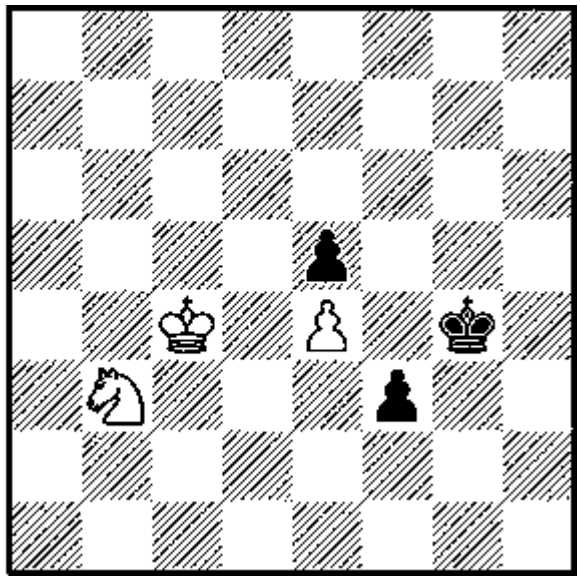
White won here only because with his king at c3 the e5-pawn could be captured with check. That can be avoided by playing 2…Kg5(h4)!! 3 Kc2 Kg4! 4 Kc3!? Kg3! (there is also 4…Kg5!?, for example: 5 Kd2!? f2 6 Ne3 Kf4 7 Kd3 Kg3! 8 Nf1+ Kf3! 9 Nd2+ Kf4). We have reached another reciprocal zugzwang position, this time with White to move. 5 Nd2 runs into 5…Kf4 6 Kd3 f2= (the main zugzwang); an equivalent line is 5 Kd2 f2 6 Ke2 Kf4 7 Nd2 (7 Nd6 Kg3) 7…f1Q+! or 5 Kd3 f2 6 Nd2 Kf4!⊙.

Incidentally, looking at this variation leads us to the astonishing conclusion that **both** sides should maneuver so as not to be the first to approach the other. As soon as White plays either Nd2 or Kd3, he falls into zugzwang; and if Black is too hasty with either …f2 or …Kf4, the zugzwang position occurs with him to move instead. Thus, we have a case known to us from pawn endings: mined squares. However, this is the only case I know of where the squares are mined for four different pieces at once, and not for the usual two.

And now, for the solution. White must play much as in the last variation, except that he must place his knight, not on c4, but on b3, leaving the c4-square open for his king.

1 Na1!! f3 2 Nb3 Kg4 3 Kc2 Kg3 4 Kc3! Kg4 5 Kc4!

2-23



B

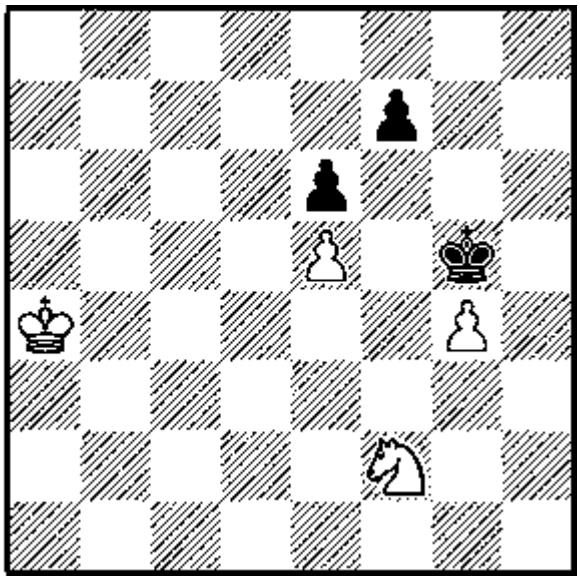
Here is the point! Black can wait no longer: on 5…Kg3 6 Kd5 f2 7 Nd2 Kf4 8 Nf1+– decides. He must go to the mined square first, which of course puts him into zugzwang.

5…Kf4 6 Kd3! (6 Kd5? Ke3; 6 Nd2? Ke3) **6…f2 7 Nd2⊙ Kg3 8 Ke2** (8 Kc4 Kf4 9 Kd5? is mistaken, in view of 9…Ke3 10 Nf1+ Kf4⊙=) **8…Kg2 9 Nf1 Kg1 10 Ne3⊙+–.**

Tragicomedies

Nimzovitch – Rubinstein
Karlsbad 1911

2-24



W?

The best square for the knight would have been d7, from where it defends the e5-pawn and prevents the exchange …f7-f6. This could easily have been achieved by 1 Kb4(b3, b5)! Kf4 2 Nd3+ K×g4 (2…Ke4 3 Kc4) 3 Nc5! Kf5 4 Nd7+–. Unfortunately, Nimzovitch was too hasty.

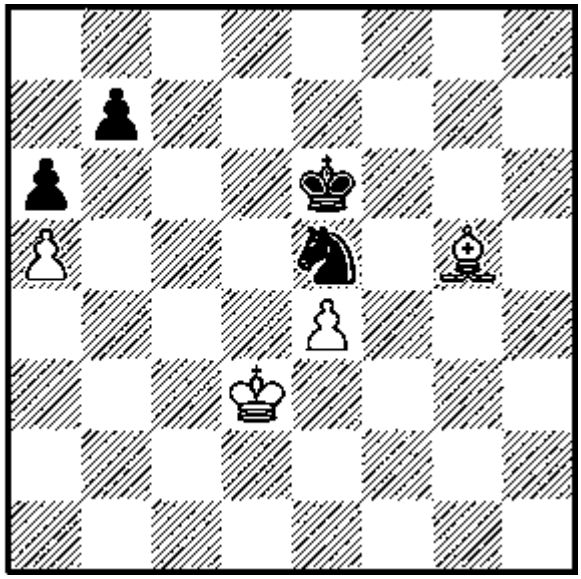
1 Nd3? f6! 2 ef K×f6 3 Nf2 Kg5

White's king is too far from the center of the action – Black has enough time to drive the knight from f2 by advancing his e-pawn.

4 Kb4 e5 5 Kc4 e4 Draw, in view of 6 Kd4 Kf4 and 7…e3.

Trolldalen – Schüssler
Groningen ech jr 1975/76

2-25



W

With 1 Kc2 Nc4 2 Bd8 (stronger than 2 Bd2 Ke5 3 Be1! K×e4) 2…Kd7 3 Kc3! Nd6 4 Bh4 N×e4+ 5 Kd4, White would probably have drawn. An even simpler route to the same end was 1 Kc3 Nc6 2 Kc4 N×a5+ 3 Kc5 △ 4 Kb6.

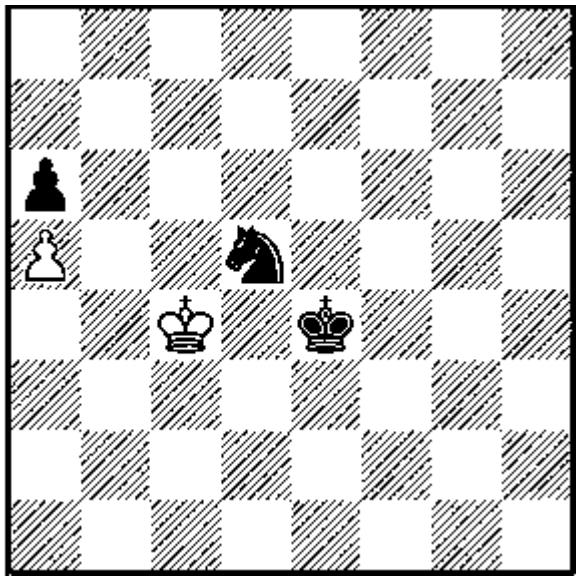
1 Kd4? Nf3+ 2 Kc5 N×g5 3 Kb6 N×e4 4 K×b7 Nc5+ 5 Kc6 Nd3 6 Kb6

Sacrificing his bishop, Trolldahlen assessed the position as drawn, and his opponent evidently

agreed with him. Neither side suspected that this was now a position from a 1914 study by Kubbel (with colors and flanks reversed).

6…Nb4 7 Kc5 Nd5 8 Kc6 Ke5 9 Kc5 Ke4 10 Kc4

2-26
$
B?

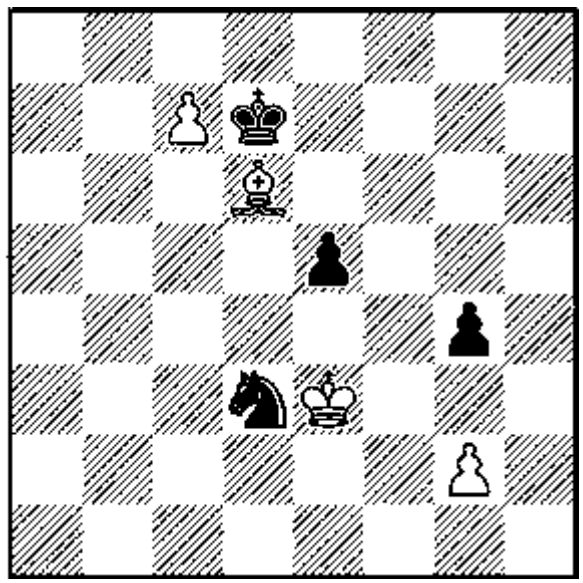


10…Nc7 11 Kc5 Kd3? does not work: 12 Kb6 Kc4 13 K×c7 Kb5 14 Kd6 K×a5 15 Kc5=. Kubbel's solution was: 10…Nf6!! 11 Kc5 Nd7+ 12 Kc6 Nb8+ 13 Kb7 Kd5 14 K×b8 Kc6! (shouldering) 15 Kc8 Kb5–+.

10…Ne3+ 11 Kc5 Nc2 12 Kb6 Nb4 13 Kc5 Nd5 14 Kc4 Ke5? (14…Nf6!!) **15 Kc5 Ke6 16 Kc6** Draw. Even if Black had found the winning plan at that moment, he could no longer have avoided the three-time repetition.

Keres – Lengyel
Luhacovice 1969

2-27
B



The game was adjourned here, and Lengyel resigned without continuing. Evidently, he assumed that his e- and g-pawns were doomed, and White must inevitably wind up two pawns ahead.

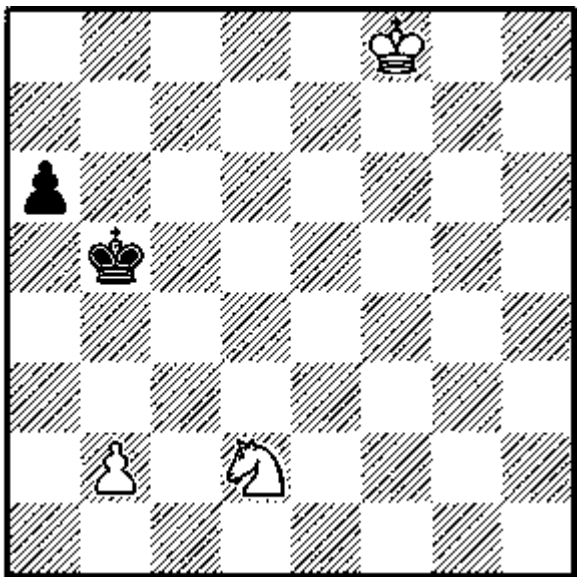
But this is not the case. As Keres pointed out, Black has a simple plan of defense which guarantees him the draw. First, he must force g2-g3, after which he can defend the g4-pawn from h2 with his knight. White cannot break down this defensive setup: Bg1 is met by …Nf3 with tempo. And there is no possible zugzwang, either.

Simplest is **1…Ne1** at once. On 2 g3 Nf3, we already have the indicated defensive position. And 2 Kf2 is met by 2…Nd3+ 3 Kf1 (3 Kg3 e4 4 K×g4 e3 5 Kf3 Ne1+ 6 Kg3 e2 7 Kf2 N×g2=) 3…Kc8 4 g3 Kd7 5 Ke2 e4 6 Ke3 Ne1=.

1…Nf4 2 g3 Ne6 is also possible (but not 2…Nd5+ 3 Ke4 Nf6+ 4 Kf5!+–) **3 B×e5 Ng5 4 Kf4 Nf3 5 Bd6 Nh2**=.

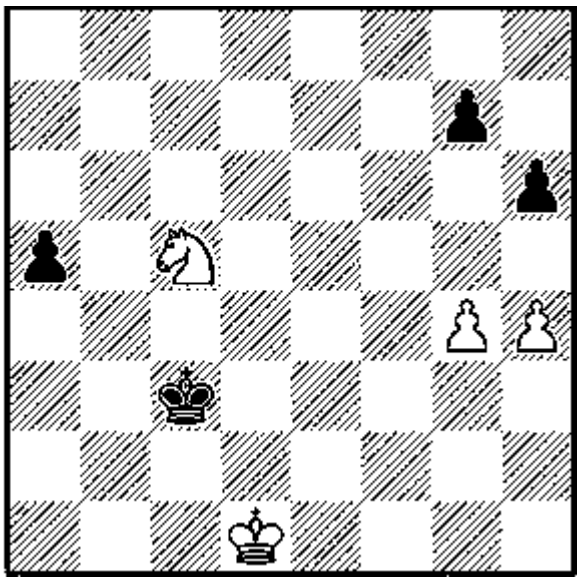
Exercises

2-28



2/8
W?

2-29



2/9
B?

Chapter 3

Knight Endgames

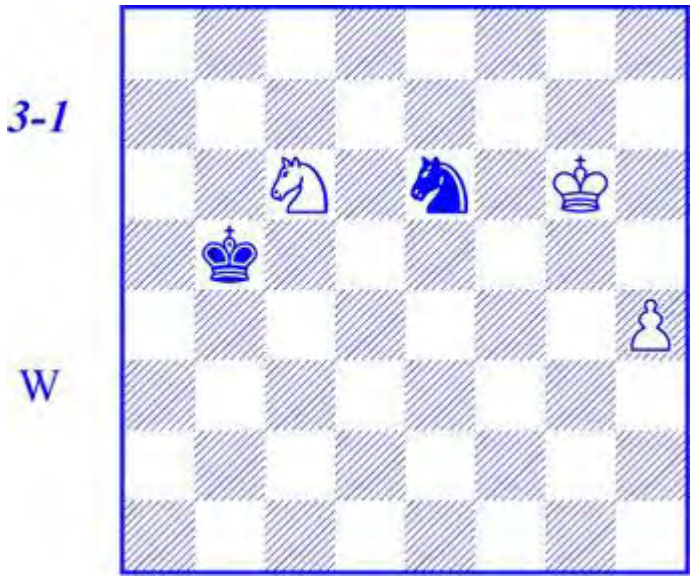
In examining the “knight versus pawns” endgame, also we learned quite a bit that is useful about knight endgames. Firstly, because the peculiarities of the knight which we learned about there (such as its “distaste” for rook pawns, or its ability to fork or win tempi by checking the enemy king), also function here. And secondly, the knight must quite often be sacrificed in order to obtain a “knight versus pawns” endgame.

The Deflecting Knight Sacrifice

We shall not be making a systematic examination of the endgame in which a knight faces a knight and pawn: its theory is quite complex, and in my view, rather chaotic. There are no principles which are operative for many positions; the evaluation and the course of the struggle depend entirely upon the concrete details.

The deflecting knight sacrifice is the almost universally employed technique in such endings. And not only in these – there are many situations in which one side tries to queen its own passed pawn or to break into the enemy’s camp with his king.

Eingorn – Beliavsky
USSR ch, Kiev 1986



1 Nd4+! N×d4 2 Kf6!+–

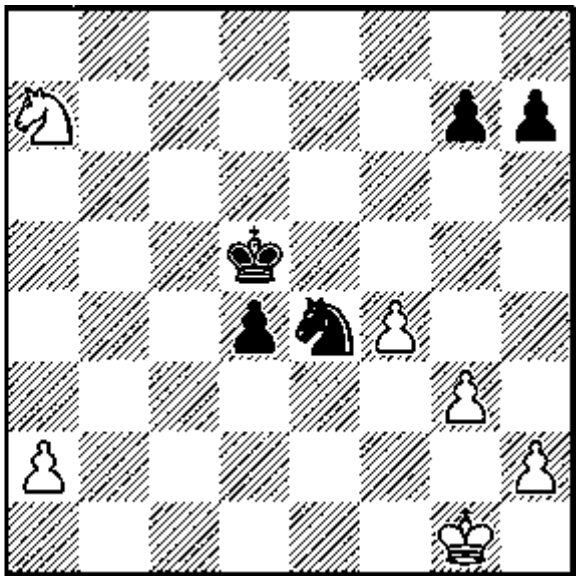
The king goes, as we taught, one square diagonally away from the knight; which renders the h-pawn unstoppable.

2…Nc2 3 h5 Ne3 4 Kg5! (the same idea again) **4…Nc4 5 h6** Black resigned, in view of 5…Ne5 6 h7 Nf7+ 7 Kf6 Nh8 8 Kg7.

In the next diagram, Black may be a pawn down, but White’s scattered pieces and more importantly the dangerous passed d-pawn, supported by the excellently centralized king and knight, assure him the advantage.

Barcza – Simagin
Moscow-Budapest m tt, 1949

3-2



B?/Play

1…d3 2 Kf1 Nc3!

It is most important to deprive the white knight of the b5-square, which is precisely the square it needs to help the king battle the passed pawn, as shown by the following variations:

2…Kd4? 3 Nb5+ Ke3 4 Na3! d2 5 Nc4+ Kd3 6 N×d2!, when White draws without too much trouble, since the a-pawn will draw one of Black's pieces to the queenside;

2…Kc4? 3 a4! Kb3 4 Nb5 K×a4 5 Nd4+.

3 Ke1! Kd4 4 Kd2 (4 Nc6+? Ke3–+) **4…Ne4+ 5 Kc1**□

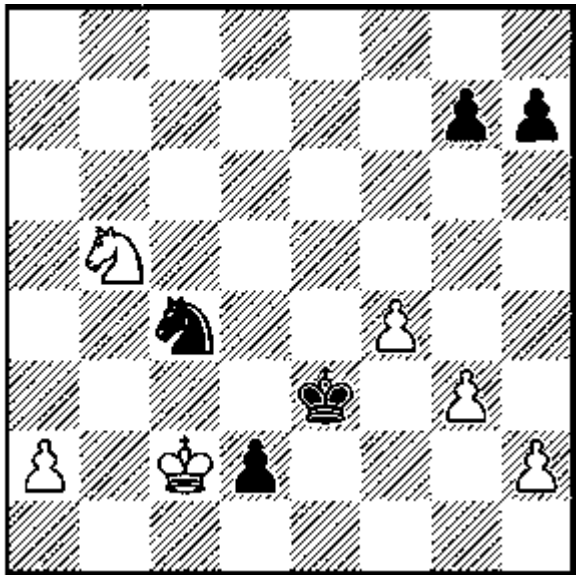
5 Ke1? (or 5 Kd1?) would lose at once to 5…Ke3. Here, that move would fall short after 6 Nb5 d2+ 7 Kc2 Ke2 8 Nd4+.

5…Nd6!!

The knight repositions itself more favorably, all the while maintaining control over that vital b5-square. Meanwhile, White's knight has no other way to reach the pawn: 6 Nc6+ Kc3 7 Ne7 (7 Ne5 d2+ 8 Kd1 Ne4) 7…d2+ 8 Kd1 Ne4 9 Nd5+ Kc4!–+.

6 Kd2 Nc4+ 7 Kc1 d2+ 8 Kc2 Ke3 9 Nb5 (9 Nc6 Nb2–+)

3-3



B?

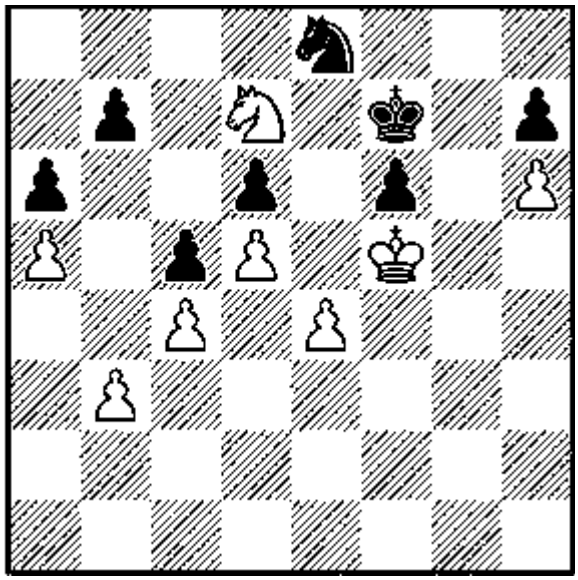
9…Na3+!

And in conclusion – a deflecting knight sacrifice (10 N×a3 Ke2). White resigned.

Hernandez – Sula

Saloniki ol 1984

3-4



W?

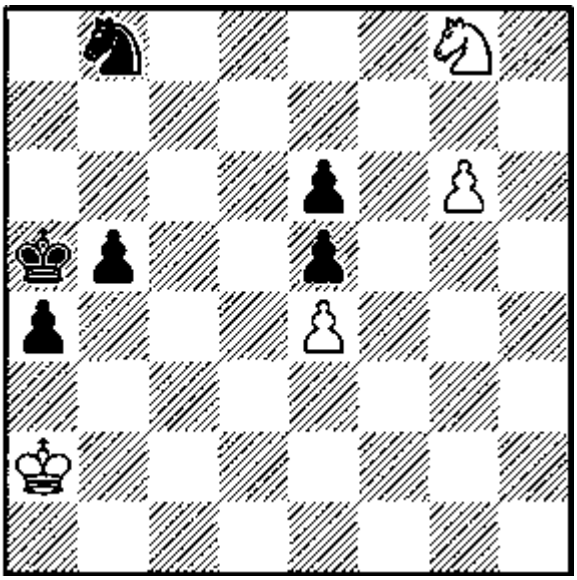
1 Nf8! K×f8 2 Ke6

This knight sacrifice has allowed the king to invade the enemy camp. Black is in zugzwang: on 2…Kg8, 3 Ke7 decides.

2…Ng7+ 3 hg+ K×g7 4 K×d6 h5 5 Ke7 h4 6 d6 h3 7 d7 h2 8 d8Q h1Q 9 Qf8+ Kh7 10 Qf7+ Kh8 11 Q×f6+ Kh7 and Black resigned.

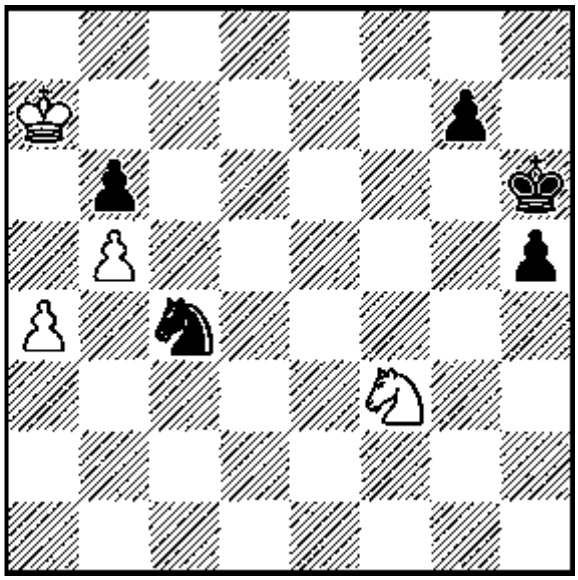
Exercises

3-5



3/1
W?

3-6



3/2
W?/Play

Botvinnik’s Formula

“Knight endgames are pawn endgames”: that is something Botvinnik once said. What he had in mind, is that many of the laws of pawn endings apply equally to knight endings. The same high value is given, for instance, to the active position of the king or the outside passed pawn. Such techniques as the pawn breakthrough, shouldering, the various methods of playing for zugzwang, and so forth, are seen constantly, not just in pawn endgames, but also in knight endgames. And we shall be convinced of this after studying a few practical examples.

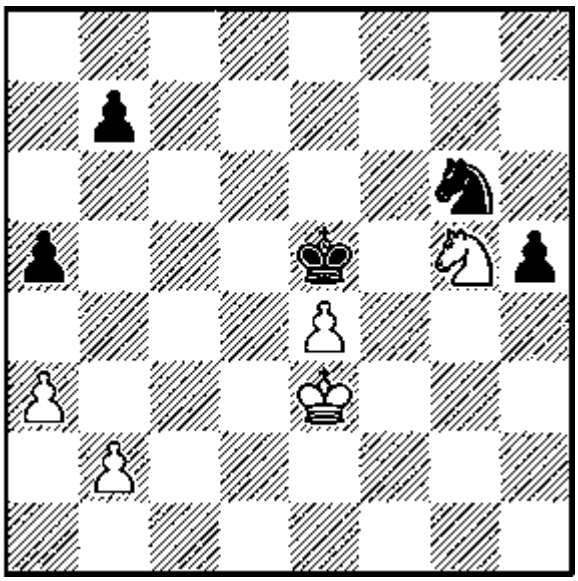
Let’s begin with a classic endgame.

In the diagram, the pawn endgame would be an easy win for Black, in view of the outside passed h-pawn. In the knight endgame, he has considerably more complex problems to solve.

Lasker – Nimzovitch
Zürich 1934

3-7

B



1…Kf6

A high degree of accuracy is required. The overhasty 1…h4? would allow the white knight to attack the queenside pawns by 2 Nf7+ Kf6 3 Nd6 b6 4 Nc4 h3 5 Kf2!

2 Nh7+ Kg7 3 Ng5 Kf6 4 Nh7+ Ke7!

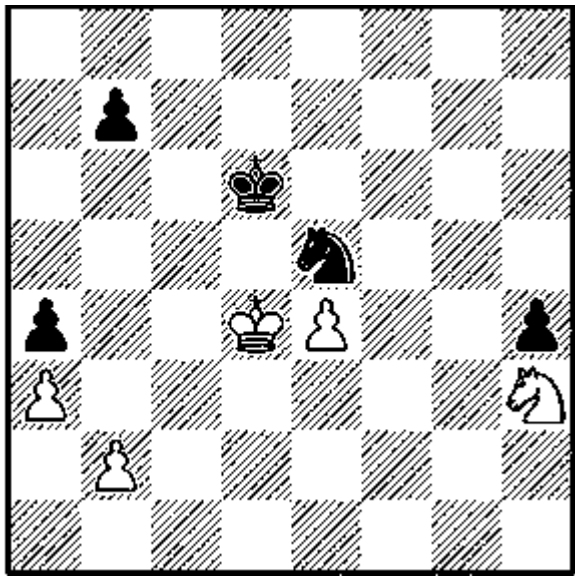
The king retreats, but only briefly; now the e5-square can be occupied by the knight. On 5 Kd4? Black forces a won pawn endgame by 5…Nf8! 6 Ng5 Ne6+!.

5 Ng5 Ne5 6 Kd4

6 b3!? was worth considering, in order to prevent Black from fixing the queenside pawns by …a5-a4, and retaining the option of moving the king either to d4 or to f4.

6…Kd6 7 Nh3 a4 8 Nf4 h4 9 Nh3

3-8



B?

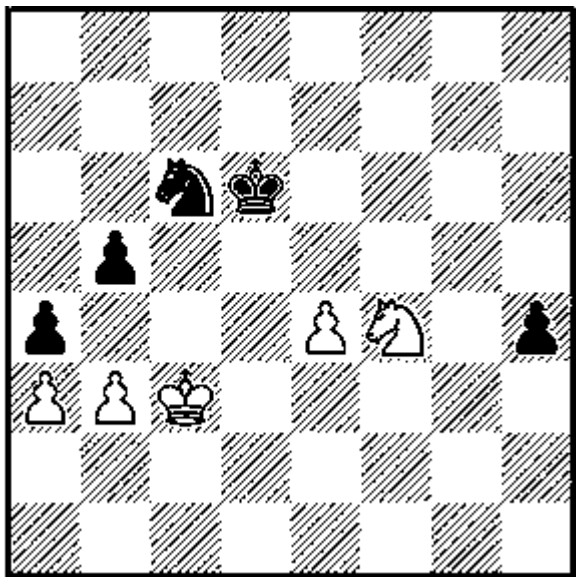
9…b6!

"Steinitz's Rule" in action! Nimzovitch intends …b7-b5 and …Nc6+; however, the check would have been better delivered with the white knight on h3, as may be seen from the variation 9…b5 10 Nf4 Nc6+ 11 Kc3!, when Black cannot play 11…Ke5 in view of 12 Ng6+. By making use of the choice of either the one-square or two-square move for this pawn, Black solves the problem – though it is true he had some help from his opponent.

10 Nf4 b5⊙ 11 Nh3?

The knight should not have left the f4-square, where it prevents the move Ke5. White's best defense was 11 Kc3! In reply, the deflecting knight sacrifice 11…Ng6?! 12 N×g6 h3 fails to 13 Nh4! h2 14 Nf5+ Ke5 15 Ng3 Kf4 16 Nh1 K×e4 17 Kd2=. If 11…Nc6, then White can either wait with 12 Kd3(d2), or exchange a pair of queenside pawns with 12 b3.

3-9



B

12…b4+!? is tempting and it will win in the line 13 ab? a3 14 b5 Nb4 15 e5+ K×e5 16 Ng6+ Ke4 17 N×h4 Nd3! However, White would answer 13 Kb2!, for example: 13…ba+ (13…ab 14 ab) 14 K×a3 ab 15 K×b3 Ne7 (otherwise, Black cannot play Ke5) 16 Kc3 Ke5 17 Nh3 K×e4 18 Kd2 Kf3 19 Ke1=.

Black could fight on with 11…Kc5!? 12 Ne6+ Kb6 13 Nf4 Ng6! 14 Nh3 Kc5. However, I am not sure that Black's positional advantage is sufficient for victory here.

11…Nc6+!

The straightforward attempt 11…Nc4 12 Kc3 Ke5 is erroneous in view of 13 b3! ab (13…N×a3 14 Kb2 Nc4+ 15 bc bc 16 Kc3 a3 17 Nf2 Kf4 18 Kc2=) 16 K×b3 K×e4 17 Kb4 △ 18 a4= (Müller/Lamprecht).

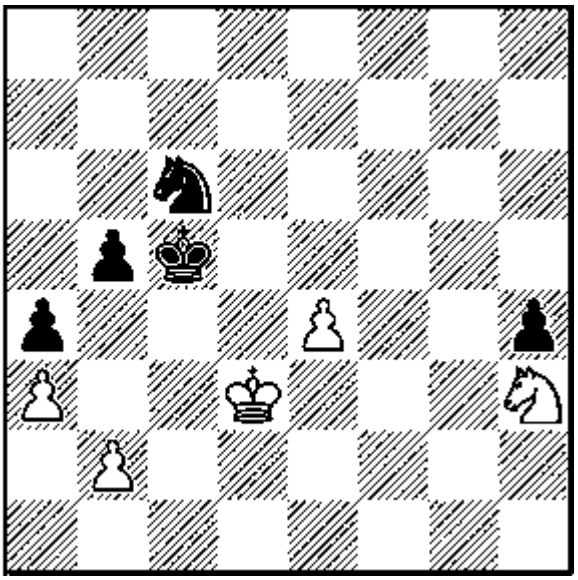
12 Ke3

Emanuel Lasker probably rejected 12 Kc3!?, because of 12…Ke5 13 Kd3 Na5. Let's look at what could happen: 14 Ng1! Kf4 15 e5 Nc6! 16 e6 Kf5 17 Kc3(e3), and the pawn is invulnerable: 17…K×e6? 18 Nf3 h3 19 Ng5+. However after 17 Kc3 Kf6! White is in zugzwang (18 Kd3 Nd8 or 18 b3 ab 19 K×b3 Nd4+). 17 Ke3 loses, too: 17…Kf6! 18 Ke4 Nd8 19 Kd5 N×e6 20 Kc6 Kf5 21 K×b5 Kg4 22 K×a4 Kg3 (Müller/Lamprecht).

12…Kc5 13 Kd3

On 13 Kf4, Black has the strong 13…Kc4, or the equally strong 13…Kd4 △ 14…Ne5. Here, we see yet another technique borrowed from the arsenal of pawn endgames: widening the beachhead.

3-10



B?

13…b4! 14 ab+

If 14 Nf4, then 14…Ne5+ 15 Kc2 ba 16 ba Kd4.

14…K×b4 15 Kc2 Nd4+!

Nimzovitch displays outstanding technique. The point of widening the beachhead is to clear the king's path to the opposite wing; but the grandmaster is in no hurry to execute this plan. First, it is useful to reposition the knight to e6, where it hobbles the enemy knight. The consequences of the variation 15…Kc4 16 Ng5 Ne5 (16…Kd4? 17 Nf3+) 17 Nh3 Kd4 18 b3 ab+ (18…a3 19 Kb1) 19 K×b3 K×e4 20 Kc2 are certainly not clear (even though this position, objectively, should be won).

16 Kb1

16 Kd3 Ne6 17 Ke3 Kb3 is absolutely hopeless.

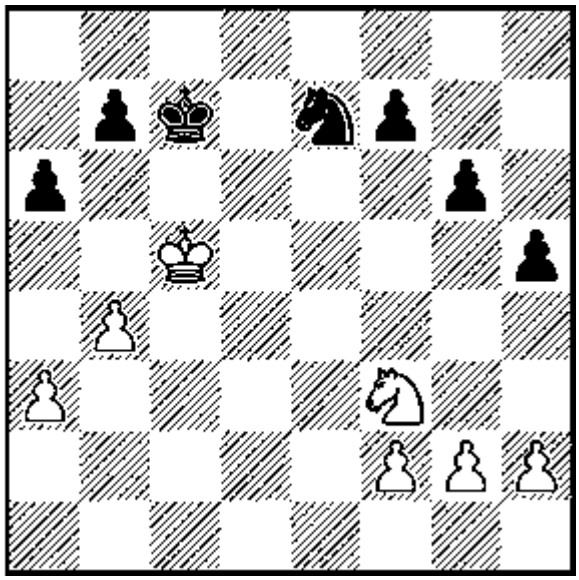
16…Ne6 17 Ka2 (17 Kc2 Kc4⊙) **17…Kc4 18 Ka3 Kd4 19 K×a4 K×e4 20 b4 Kf3 21 b5 Kg2** White resigned.

On 22 b6, there follows 22…K×h3 23 b7 (23 Kb5 Nd8) 23…Nc5+. Nimzovitch evidently calculated this whole variation when he played 15…Nd4+!.

Botvinnik – Kholmov

Moscow ch tt 1969

3-11



W

White's king is considerably more active than his opponent's, and that factor defines his great, and probably winning, advantage.

1 Ng5!

It is important to induce Black's pawns to advance, as then they will be easier to attack.

1…f6 2 Nh7 f5 3 h4

After 3…b6+ 4 Kd4 Kd6 5 Nf8 Nc6+ 6 Ke3 Ne5 7 Kf4, the g6-pawn is lost. If White had played 3 f4? (instead of 3 h4), the king would not have had the f4-square, and Black would hold (by 6…Ne7).

3…f4

Waiting tactics must eventually result in zugzwang for Black, so he lashes out in a desperate attempt at counterattack on the kingside.

4 Nf8 b6+

In Botvinnik's opinion, there were more practical chances after 4…f3!? 5 g3 (5 gf? b6+ 6 Kd4 Nf5+ 7 Ke5 N×h4∞) 5…Nf5 6 N×g6 N×g3, although Black's position remains difficult after 7 Kd4.

5 Kd4 Nf5+ 6 Ke4 N×h4

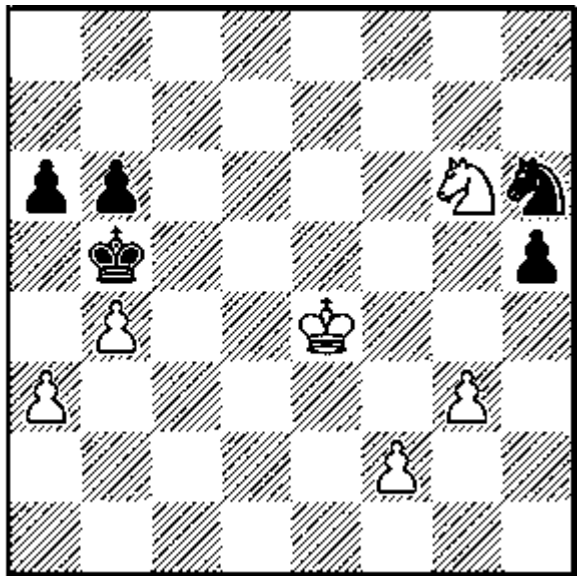
6…f3 would not have helped, in view of 7 K×f3 N×h4+ 8 Kg3 Nf5+ (8…g5 9 Ne6+) 9 Kf4.

7 Ne6+ Kc6 8 N×f4 Kb5

On 8…g5, White replies 9 g3! gf 10 gh+–.

9 g3 Nf5 10 N×g6 Nh6

3-12



W

Now it is time to use the technique of defending the pawn with the knight that we learned in the "Knight vs. Pawns" chapter.

11 Ne5! Ka4 12 Nc4 Kb3

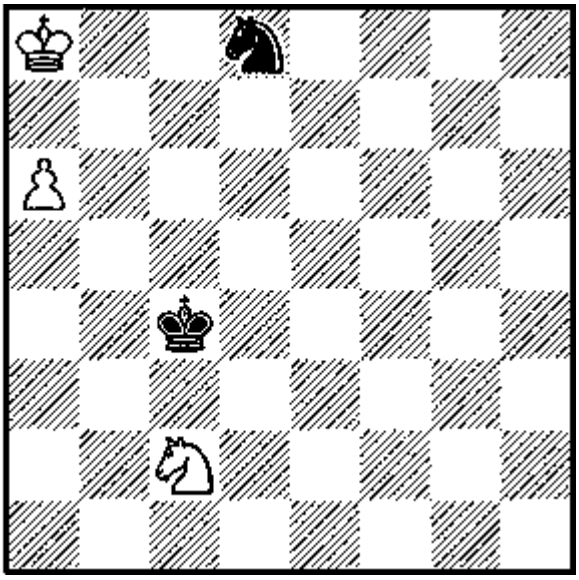
After 12…b5 13 Ne5 K×a3 14 Nc6!, the knight defends the pawn and prevents …a6-a5. If 12…Kb5, then 13 Nb2+– (barrier).

13 N×b6 K×a3 14 Nd5 Kb3 15 f4 Kc4 16 Nc7 K×b4 17 N×a6+ Black resigned.

The following is an example of zugzwang.

R. Réti, 1929

3-13
$
W?



On 1 Kb8? Kb5! (1…Nc6+? 2 Kb7 Kc5 3 Nd4! or 3 Nb4! – a standard deflecting knight sacrifice) 2 Nb4 Nc6+ 3 Kb7, Black forces the draw with 3…Na5+! 4 Kc7 Nc6.

Before moving his king to b8, White must lose a move so as to force the enemy king, through zugzwang, to occupy the a5-square.

1 Ka7! Kb5

Black loses immediately with 1…Kc5 2 Nd4! (zugzwang – but not 2 Nb4? Kb5 3 Kb8 Nc6+, with the drawing position we know already) 2…K×d4 3 Kb6+–.

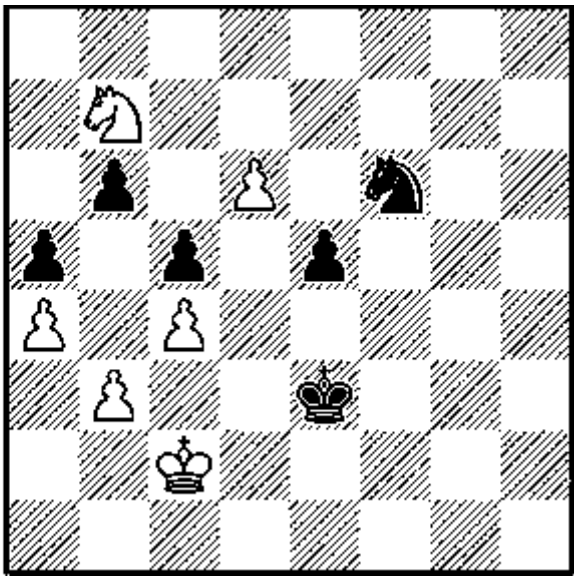
2 Nb4⊙ Ka5

The goal is achieved! Black's king stands badly here – it deprives the knight of this square, and also fails to control c6.

3 Kb8! Nc6+ 4 Kb7 (4 Kc7?? N×b4 5 a7 Nd5+) **4…Nd8+ 5 Kc7 Ne6+ 6 Kb8(c6)**+–.

Alburt – Lerner
Kiev 1978

3-14
W?



Although Black might appear to be better, thanks to his more active king, White's spectacular pawn break completely changes the picture.

1 N×c5!! bc 2 b4 ab

Let's examine the other possibilities:

(1) 2…cb 3 c5 b3+ 4 Kb2 (or 4 K×b3 Ne4 5 Kc4);

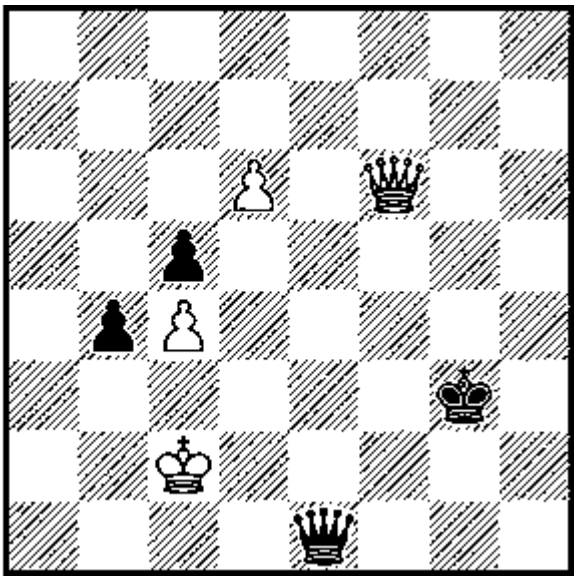
(2) 2…e4 3 bc Kf2 4 c6 e3 5 d7 e2 6 d8Q;

(3) 2…Nd7 3 ba Kf2 4 a6 e4 5 a7 e3 6 a8Q e2 7 Qe4 e1Q 8 Q×e1+ K×e1 9 a5.

3 a5 e4 4 a6 Kf2 5 a7 e3 6 a8Q e2 7 Qf8 e1Q 8 Q×f6+ Kg3

3-15

W



The queen ending is a win. White only has to get his queen to the d-file, where it will safeguard the king against checks and support the advance of his passed pawn.

9 Qg5+ Kh3

9…Kf3 10 Qd5+ Kg3 11 Qd3+ Kh4 12 d7+–.

10 Qd2! Qa1

10…Qe4+ 11 Qd3+; 10…b3+ 11 Kc3 Qa1+ 12 K×b3 Qb1+ 13 Ka4+–.

11 d7 Qa4+ 12 Kb1 Qb3+ 13 Kc1 Qa3+ (13…Q×c4+ 14 Kb2) **14 Kd1 Qb3+ 15 Ke2 Kg4!**

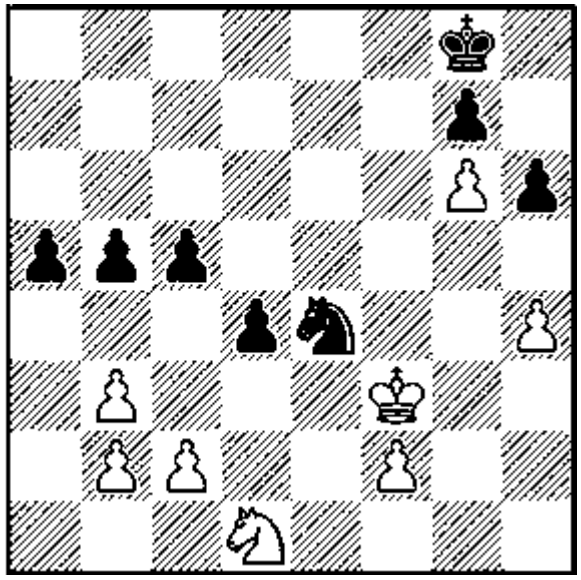
The final trap: on 16 d8Q??, Black has a perpetual: 16…Qf3+ 17 Ke1 Qh1+ 18 Kf2 Qh2+ 19 Ke3 Qf4+ 20 Kd3 Qf5+. White replies with a typical trick for queen endgames: he utilizes the enemy king position to meet Black's check with a check of his own.

16 Qd1! Q×c4+ 17 Ke3+ Black resigned.

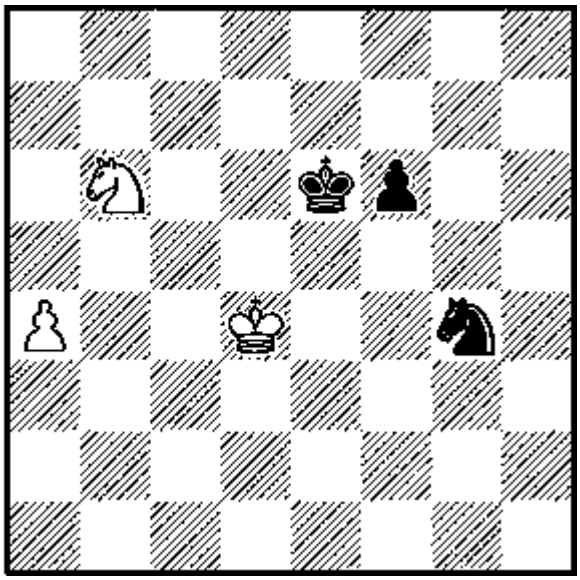
Exercises

3-16

3/3
B?

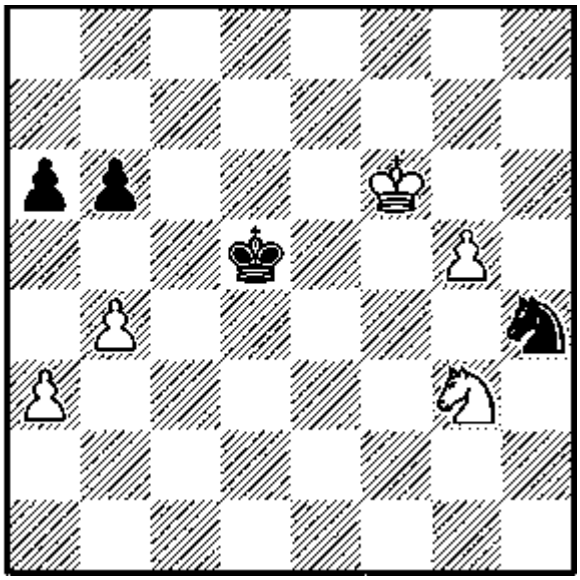


3-17



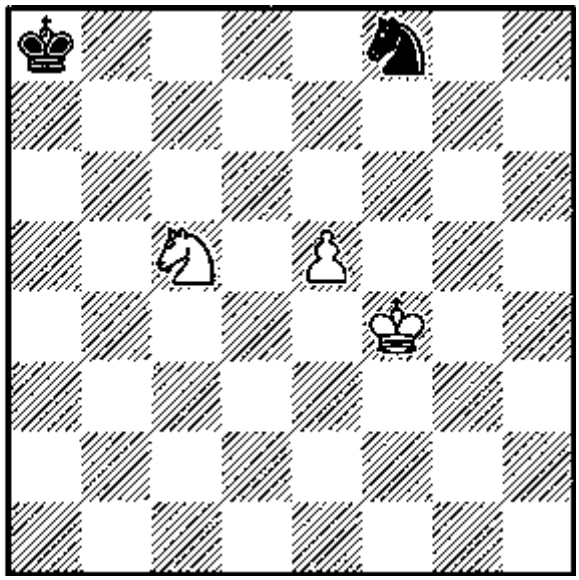
3/4
W?

3-18



3/5
W?

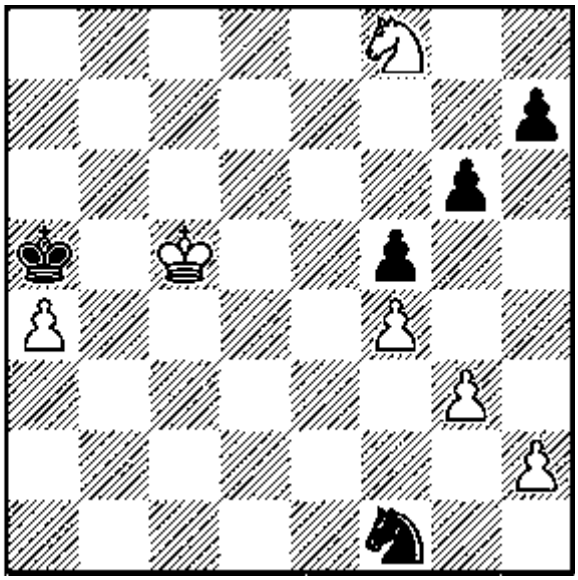
3-19



3/6
W?

3-20

3/7
W?



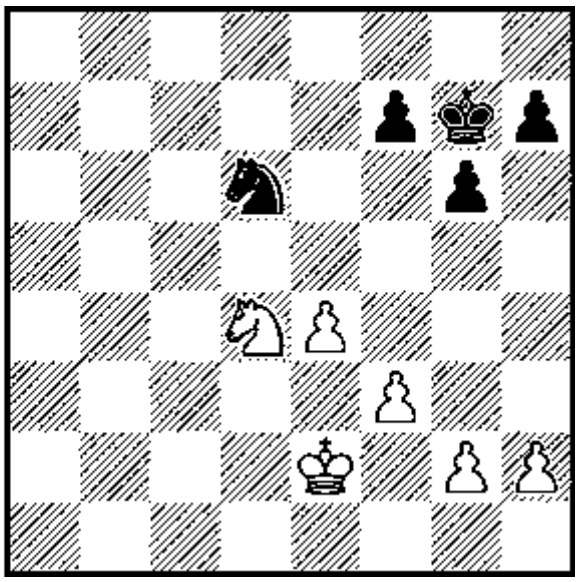
Pawns on the Same Side

Is it possible to convert an extra pawn, if all the pawns are on the same side? Practice in such positions has shown, that with the exception of pawn endgames, a player's chances of success are greatest in knight endgames. For example, ***the "four vs. three" position is considered a win***.

R. Fine, 1941

3-21

B

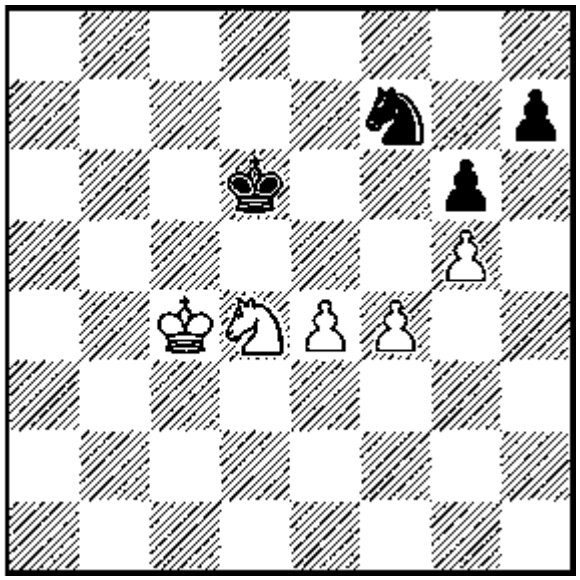


1…Kf6 2 g3 Ke5 3 Nc6+ Ke6 4 Ke3 f5

A reasonable plan, in principle: Black tries to trade off as many pawns as possible. Fine also examines other defensive plans:

4…Kd7 5 Nd4 f6 6 f4 Ke7 7 h4 (White strengthens his position to the maximum by advancing his kingside pawns) 7…Nf7 8 g4 Kd7 9 Kd3 Ke7 10 Kc4 Kd6 11 g5! fg 12 hg

3-22

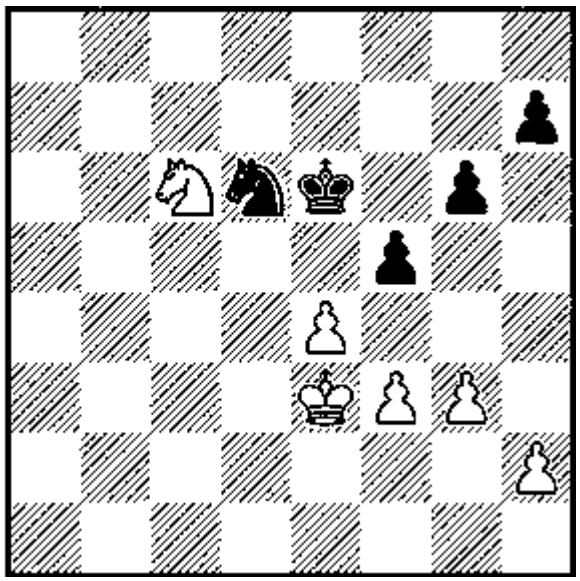


B

12…h6 (otherwise, Black will soon run out of moves: 12…Ke7 13 e5 Nd8 14 Kd5 Nf7 15 Nc6+ Ke8 16 e6 Nh8 17 Ke5 Kf8 18 Kf6+–) 13 e5+ Ke7 14 gh N×h6 15 Kd5 Ng4 16 Nc6+ Ke8 (16…Kd7 17 e6+ Ke8 18 Kd6 Nf6 19 Nb4 Ne4+ 20 Ke5 Nf2 21 Nd5 Ng4+ 22 Kd6+–) 17 Ke6 Ne3 19 Nb4 Ng2 19 Nd5, followed by 20 Kf6+–.

4…g5 5 Nd4+ Kf6 6 f4! gf+ 7 gf Nc4+ 8 Kf2 (8 Kf3 Nd2+) 8…Kg7 9 e5 Kg6 10 Ke2 Nb2 11 Kf3 Nc4 12 Ke4 Nd2+ 13 Kd5 Nf1 14 f5+ Kg5 15 e6! fe+ 16 K×e6 N×h2 17 f6+–.

3-23



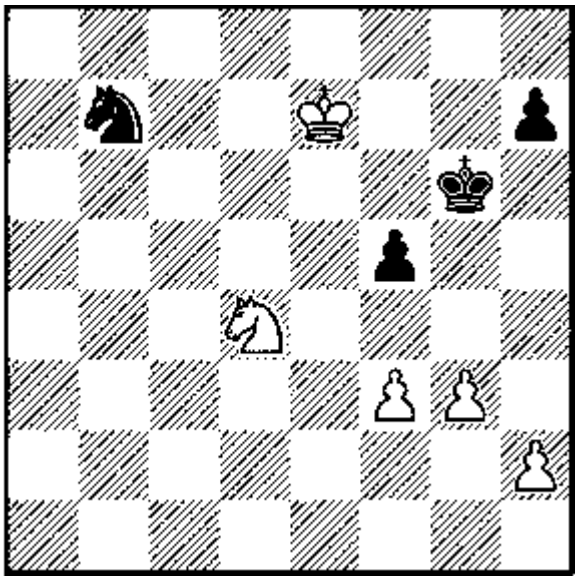
W?

5 Nd4+

5 e5? would be premature in view of 5…Nc4+ (but not 5…Kd5? 6 ed K×c6 7 Kf4 K×d6 8 Kg5) 6 Kd4 Nd2, or 6 Kf4 Kd5 (Dvoretsky). But on 5…Ke7 White can now play 6 e5 Nc4+ 7 Kf4 h6 8 h4 Nb2 9 N×f5+! gf 10 K×f5, when three pawns outweigh the knight: 10…Kf7 11 f4 Nd3 12 h5 Nf2 13 g4 Nh3 14 g5+–.

5…Kf6 6 ef gf 7 Kf4 Kg6 8 Ke5 Nf7+ 9 Ke6 Nd8+ 10 Ke7 Nb7

3-24



W

11 Ne6!

Discovered by Chekhover. Fine examined 11 f4 Nc5 12 Nf3 (12 g4! is stronger: 12…fg 13 f5+ Kh5 14 f6 Nd3 15 Nc6+– Müller) 12…Kh5 13 Ne5, but then Black could play for stalemate: 13…h6! 14 Kf6 Ne4+ 15 K×f5 Ng3+!, when the outcome remains unclear.

11…Na5 12 Nf4+ Kg5 13 h4+ Kh6 14 Kf6+–

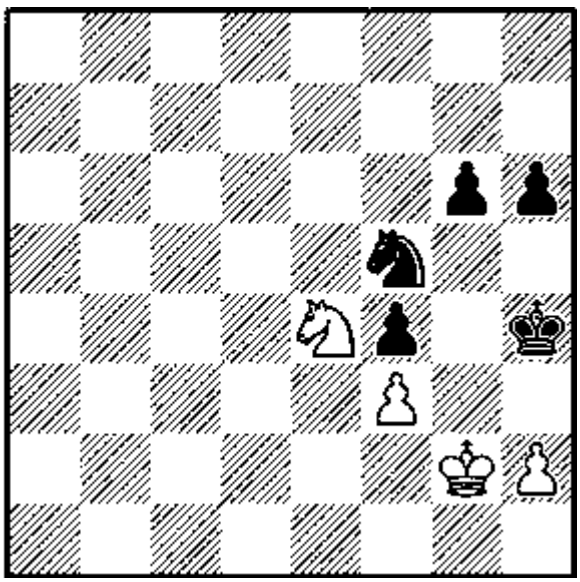
During the course of our analysis, we obtained a number of won positions involving a smaller number of pawns. Nevertheless, the configurations of “one pawn vs. two” and “two pawns vs. three” can frequently be saved; defending them, however, requires accuracy.

Tragicomedies

Fine – Najdorf

New York m (3) 1949

3-25



W?

White should hold the position. It is essential, however, not to move the pawn from h2:

1 Nf2 Ne3+ 2 Kg1 Nc2 3 Nd3 g5 4 Kf2 Kh3 5 Kg1 h5 (5…Nd4 6 Nf2+ Kh4 7 Kg2) 6 Nf2+ Kh4 7 Nd3, etc.

1 h3?

Now Black has a forced win. He executes a deflecting sacrifice of his knight, which allows him to snap off the pawn at h3, and thereby obtain a decisive passed h-pawn.

1…Ne3+ 2 Kh2 Nc2! 3 Kg2 Ne1+ 4 Kf2 K×h3! 5 K×e1 Kg2 6 Ke2 h5 7 Ng5 h4 8 Ne6 g5!

White resigned, in view of 9 N×g5 h3 10 N×h3 K×h3 11 Kd3 Kg2–+.

Chapter 4

Bishops versus Pawns

The Elementary Fortresses

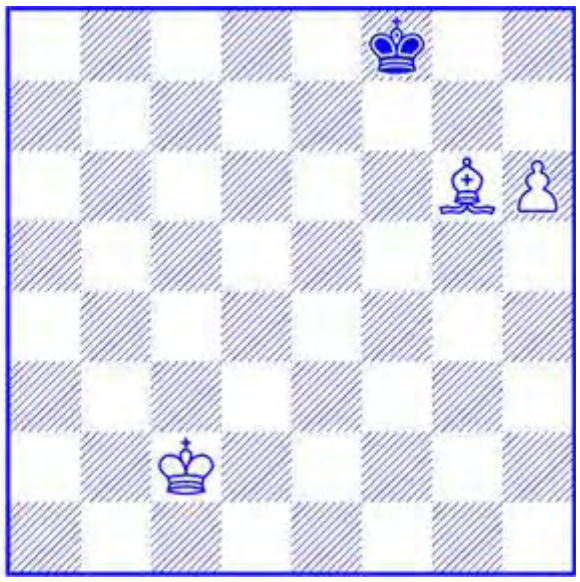
There are many endgames in which the only way to defend consists of constructing a position impenetrable to the enemy. Such a position is called a fortress, and the method is called constructing a fortress.

I use the term "elementary fortress" to mean those theoretical positions with minimal material and a king usually placed on the edge or in a corner of the board, in which the stronger side proves unable to exploit a significant material advantage. We have already encountered such positions in the chapter on "Knight vs. Pawns" (Diagrams 2-2, 2-4, and 2-5). Here, and also in later chapters, you will learn other elementary fortresses which are important for the practical player.

Bishop and Rook's Pawn

If the bishop does not control the rook pawn's queening square, then the weaker side has only to get his king into the corner (we call that the "safe" corner).

4-1



Black to move plays **1…Kg8!**, with an obvious draw.

Let's learn the techniques of cutting the king off from the safe corner. Let's suppose that it is White's move instead. If the bishop were on f5, he would win after 1 Be6! With Black's king on f6, a different standard cutoff maneuver – 1 Bh5(e8)! – works instead. But in the diagrammed position, there is only one way to play for the win:

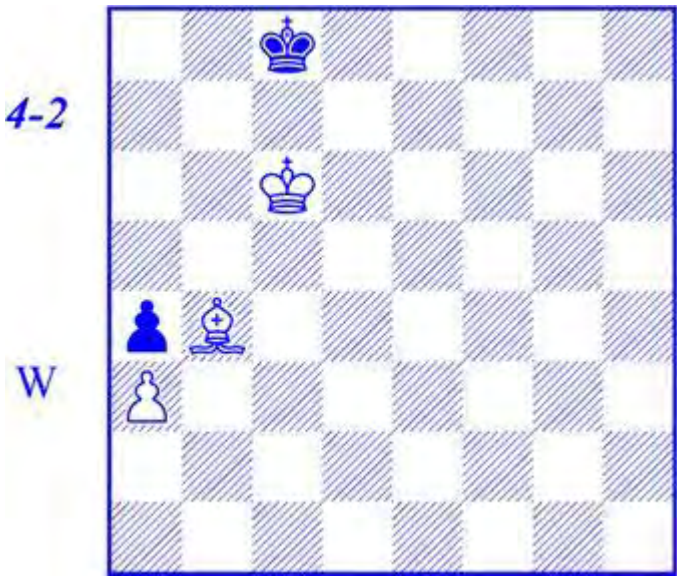
1 Bh7 Kf7 2 Kd3 Kf6 (△ 3…Kg5) **3 Bf5 Kf7** (△ 4…Kg8) **4 Bh7** (4 Be6+ Kg6) **4…Kf6**=

Relocate the white king to d2, and it can reach the pawn in time to help it queen: 1 Bh7! Kf7 2 Ke3 Kf6 3 Kf4+–.

Everything we have said so far is elementary. Yet even strong players forget about these ideas surprisingly often, and make mistakes in the simplest positions. I had no difficulty finding examples for the "Tragicomedies" section of this chapter.

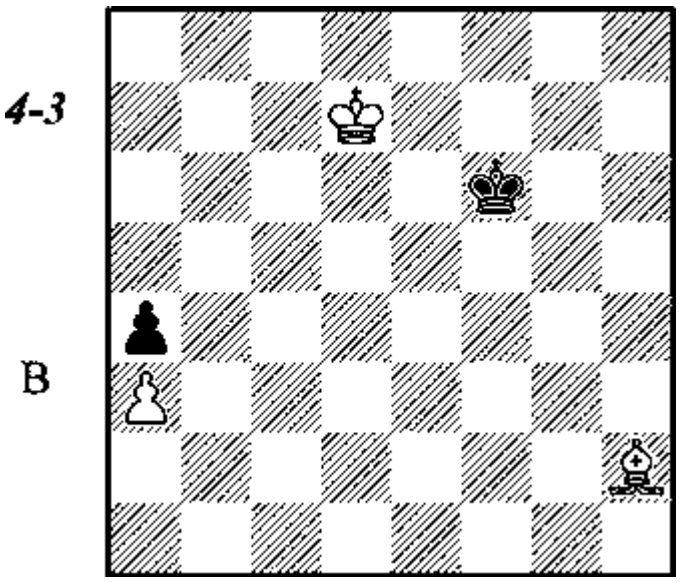
Now let's look at a position with paired rook pawns (with the king cut off from the corner). The famous theoretician Vsevolod Rauzer did considerable analysis on this situation.

V. Rauzer, 1928



White cuts off and then drives the king away from the corner, yet he still cannot win. ***The defensive method is simple: just keep the king in the upper half of the board.*** Then, any attempt to remove the a4-pawn will allow Black's king to get back to the safe corner a8.

1 Bd6 Kd8 2 Kb7 Kd7 3 Bc7 Ke6 4 Kc6 Ke7 5 Bb6 Ke6 6 Bc5 Ke5 7 Bf8 Ke6 8 Bd6 Kf7 9 Kd7 Kf6 10 Bh2



10…Kf7

10…Kf5 11 Ke7 Kg5 (but not 11…Ke4? 12 Ke6+–) 12 Ke6 Kg6 is also possible.

11 Be5 Kg6

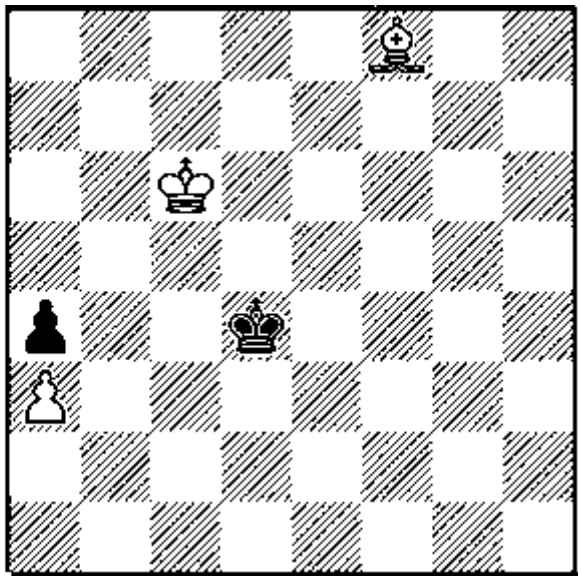
Or 11…Kf8, but not 11…Kg8? 12 Kc6! Kf7 13 Kb5 Ke6 14 K×a4!+–.

12 Ke6 (12 Kc6 Kf5!) **12…Kg5 13 Bb2 Kg6 14 Bf6 Kh6 15 Kf7 Kh7 16 Be5 Kh6 17 Bg7+ Kh7 18 Kf8 Kg6 19 Kg8 Kf5 20 Kf7 Kg5 21 Bf8 Kf5 22 Be7**

White has managed to drive the king closer to the center; but now he has to keep him from returning to a8. As a result, the way is once again open to the upper half of the board.

22…Ke5 23 Ke8 Ke6 24 Bf8 Kf6 25 Bb4 Kg7, etc.

Now let's see what happens with the king in the lower half of the board instead: let's play 7…Kd4? (instead of 7…Ke6).

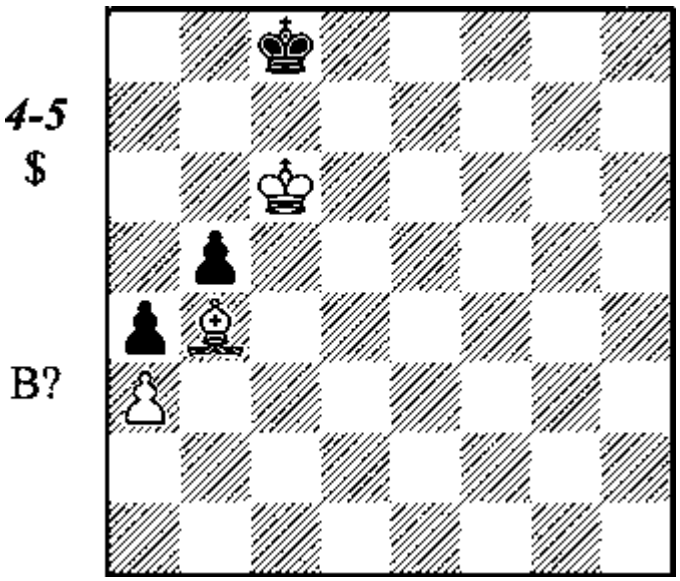


8 Bd6! Ke4 (8…Kc4 9 Bc5 Kd3 10 Kb5) 9 Kb5 Kd5 10 Bh2☉ Ke6 11 K×a4 Kd7 12 Kb5 Kc8 13 Kb6+–. From this variation we can see how vital that h2-b8 diagonal is to the bishop. However, the only way the bishop can occupy it is if the black king gets too frisky. If he follows the previously mentioned rule of defense instead, then White will be unable to keep the bishop on the necessary diagonal and keep the king out at the same time.

Amazingly, in the last diagrammed position Averbakh examines only 8 Bg7+?, allowing Black to gain the half-point by 8…Ke4! (after 8…Kc4?, the quickest win is by 9 Bb2 Kb3 10 Kb5!) 9 Kd6 Kf5 10 Be5, and now 10…Kg6 – again, not the "active" 10…Ke4? 11 Ke6!+–. And yet, in the final position, it is still quite difficult to demonstrate a win for White. For example, after 11…Kf3! 12 Kf5 Ke3, he must find the exact move: 13 Bb2!! I won't reproduce all of Rauzer's analysis here – those wishing to see it may find it in any endgame reference.

I might add (without giving the full proof, which is pretty weighty) that if, in Rauzer's starting position, we move the pawn on a3 back to a2, the evaluation changes. White will try to stalemate the enemy king (while still keeping him away from the corner, of course), in order to force the move a4-a3, after which the bishop can pick off the pawn. If Black tries to avoid this scenario, then he must move his king into the center, which will allow White, by playing a2-a3 at the right moment, to obtain the "bad" black king situation we have already seen.

Now for one more variation on Rauzer's position (analyzed by Horwitz and Averbakh). Let's add a black pawn at b5.



Now the king's arrival in that upper left-hand corner is mortally dangerous. It will be stalemated, and be forced to play …b5-b4, when the a3-pawn goes to the b-file. White to move wins quickly by 1 Ba5 Kb8 2 Bb6 Ka8 (2…Kc8 3 Bc7☉) 3 Kc7☉ b4 4 ab+–.

But Black to move renders the position drawn, since White can no longer stalemate the king. The move …b5-b4 is no longer even fatal; in fact, at the right moment it will be Black's salvation.

1…Kd8! 2 Kd6 Ke8 3 Ke6 Kd8 4 Bd6 (4 Ba5+ Ke8!) **4…Kc8** (4…Ke8? 5 Be7⊙) **5 Be5** (5 Ke7 Kb7 6 Kd7 b4! 7 ab Kb6=, but not 7…a3? 8 Bc5! a2 9 Bd4+–) **5…Kd8!**

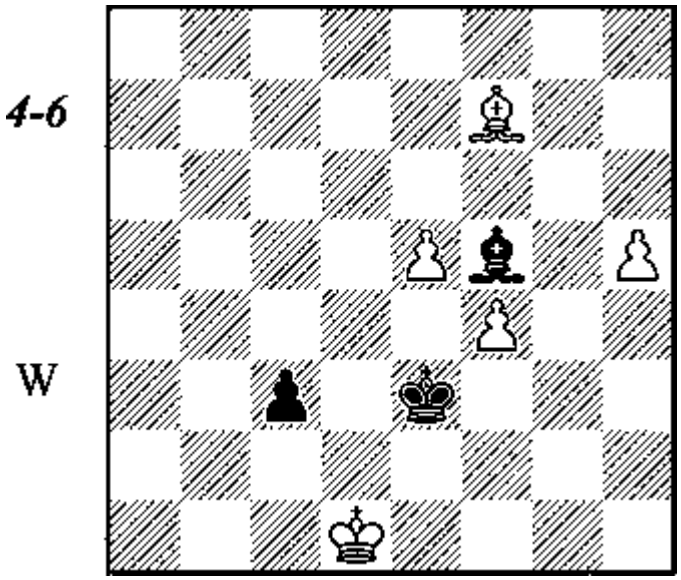
Black loses after 5…Kb7? 6 Kd6 Kc8 (6…b4 7 ab Kb6 8 Bb2! Kb5 9 Ba3 Kc4 10 Kc6 Kb3 11 b5; 6…Kb6 7 Bd4+ Kb7 8 Kd7) 7 Bf6 Kb7 8 Bd8 Kc8 9 Bb6 Kb7 10 Kc5 Kc8 11 Kc6 Kb8 12 Ba5 Ka7 (12…Kc8 13 Bc7; 12…Ka8 13 Kc7 Ka7 14 Bb6+ Ka6 15 Kc6) 13 Bc7 or 13 Bb4.

6 Bf6+ Kc7! 7 Be7 Kc6 8 Bd6 b4!=

White can drive the enemy king to the kingside and try to stalemate it there. In order to avoid stalemate, the king will have to retreat to the lower half of the board; but that is less dangerous now than it was without the b5-pawn, in view of …b5-b4! at the right moment, which now becomes a resource for Black.

Tragicomedies

Gutman – Mikenas
Riga 1969



What could have been simpler than 1 e6 K×f4 2 e7 Bd7 3 h6+–, or 1 h6 K×f4 2 e6+–?

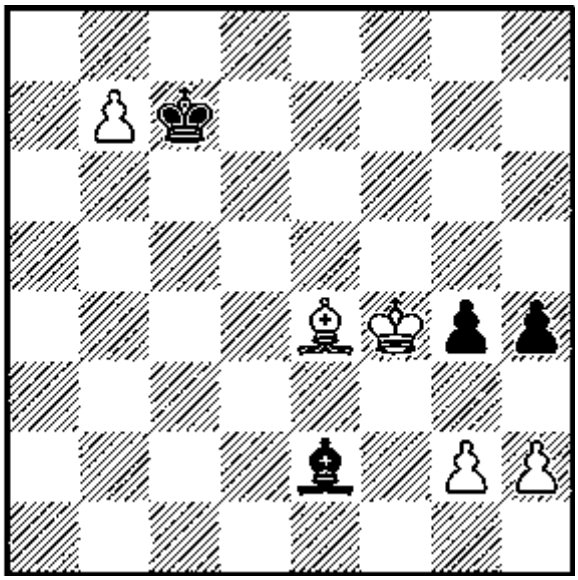
1 Bg6?? K×f4 2 B×f5

Gutman evidently expected 2…K×f5? 3 h6 Kg6 4 e6+–. However, it is more important for Black to take, not the bishop, but the e-pawn.

2…K×e5! 3 h6 Kf6 4 Kc2 Kf7 5 Bh7 Kf6 6 Bg8 Kg6 7 h7 Kg7 Draw.

Gershon – Thorhallsson
Bermuda 1999

4-7



W

Here too, the win is elementary: 1 Kg5 h3 2 g3, followed by 3 Bf5 – White winds up two pawns ahead. Gershon chose a different way, making the same mistake Gutman did in the preceding example: he only expected Black to take his attacked bishop.

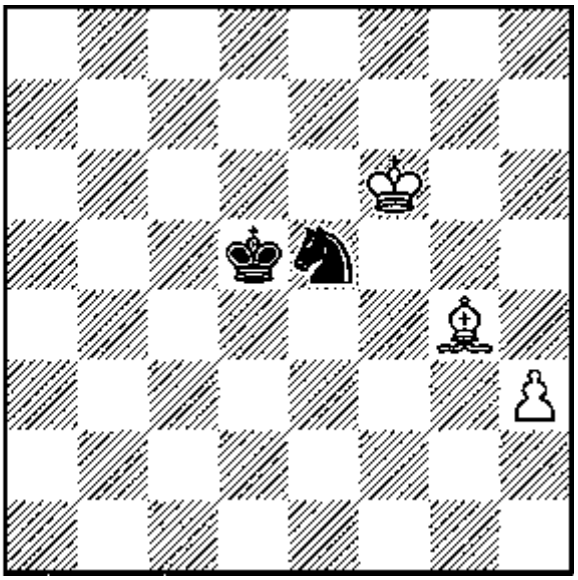
1 h3?? gh 2 gh Ba6 3 Kg5 B×b7 4 B×b7 Kd7!

On 5 K×h4, the black king has time to get to h8; otherwise, we have Rauzer's drawn position. The game ended in a draw.

Where should Black put his king in the next diagram? As close as possible to h8, of course.

Fischer – Taimanov
Vancouver cmqf (2)

4-8



B

The most accurate way to draw was: 1…Nd3! 2 h4 Nf4 3 Kf5 Kd6! 4 K×f4 Ke7=. Also possible was 1…Kd6 2 Be2 Nd7+ 3 Kf7 Ke5 4 h4 Nf6=.

Amazingly, the highly experienced grandmaster sent his king off in the opposite direction.

1…Ke4?? 2 Bc8! Kf4 (2…Nf3 3 Bb7+; 2…Nd3 3 Bf5+) **3 h4**

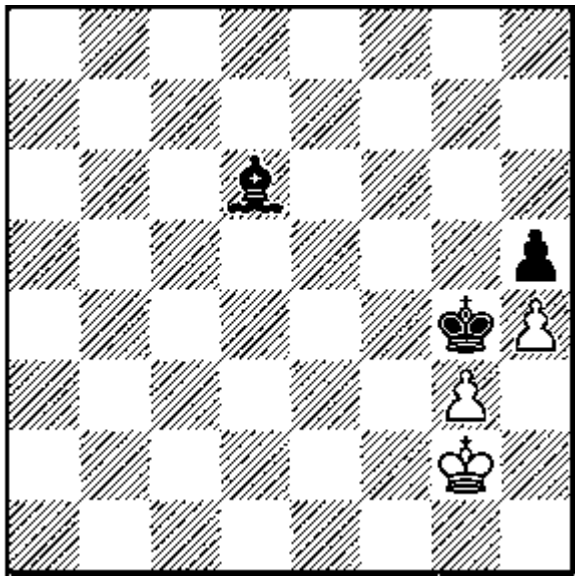
Nothing can save him now: as you will recall, the knight has a difficult time with rook pawns.

3…Nf3 4 h5 Ng5 5 Bf5! Nf3 6 h6 Ng5 7 Kg6 Nf3 8 h7 Nh4+ 9 Kf6 Black resigned.

Dombrowska – Lyszowska
Polish ch 1988

4-9

W?



1 Kg1?? Kh3!

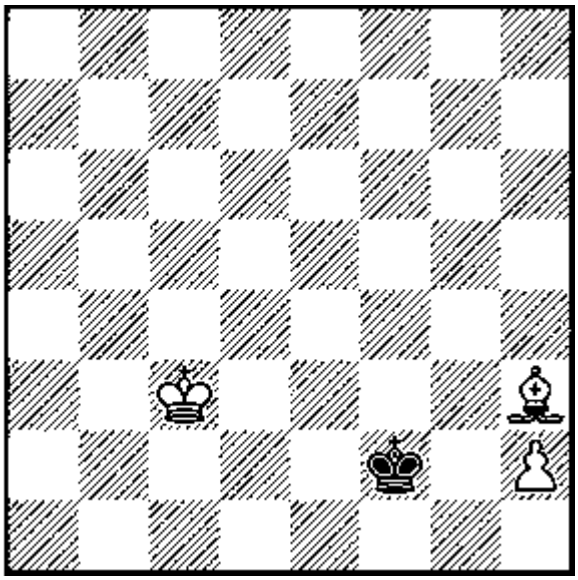
If 2 Kh1, then 2…Bc5⊙ 2 g4 hg, and the rook pawn becomes a knight pawn. And on 2 Kf1, either 2…Kh2 or 2…Bc5 decides. Therefore, White resigned.

White had to play 1 Kh2! Black can neither drive White's king from the corner, nor put White in zugzwang. For example, 1…Kf3 2 Kh3 Bc5 3 Kh2 Bd4 4 Kh1!= (but not 4 Kh3?? Bg1⊙).

Exercises

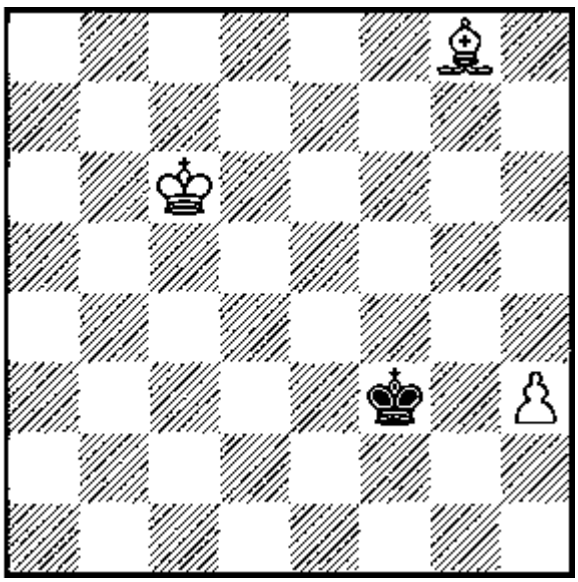
4-10

4/1
W?

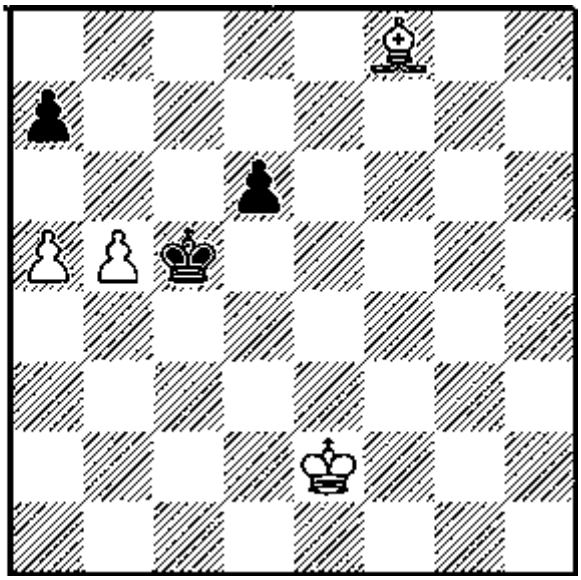


4-11

4/2
W?



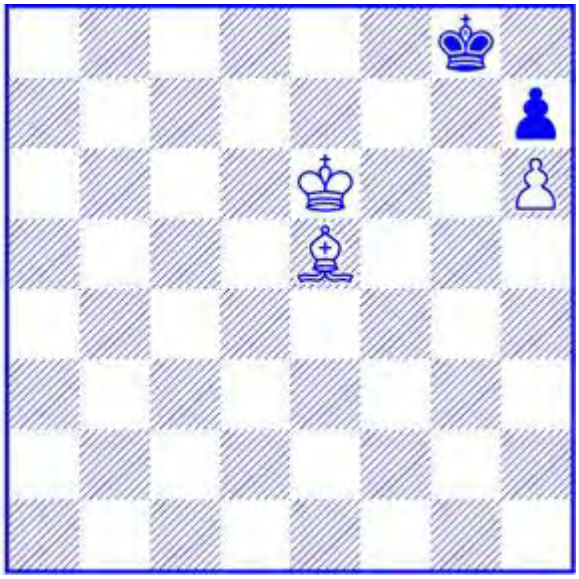
4-12



4/3
W?

Pawns at h6 and h7

4-13

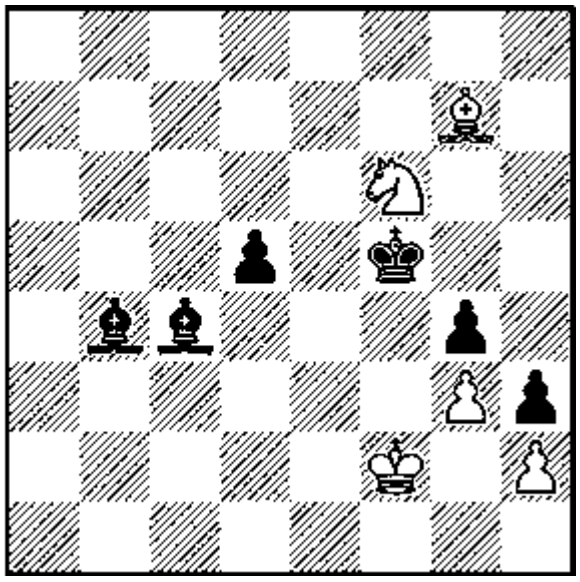


Even though the bishop controls the queening square, this position is still drawn. On **1 Kf6**, Black of course replies **1…Kf8!**= (but not 1…Kh8?? 2 Kf7#). The evaluation would not be changed, even if you added pawn pairs at g5/g6 and f4/f5.

Tragicomedies

Maiwald – Bischoff
German ch, Gladenbach 1997

4-14



W?

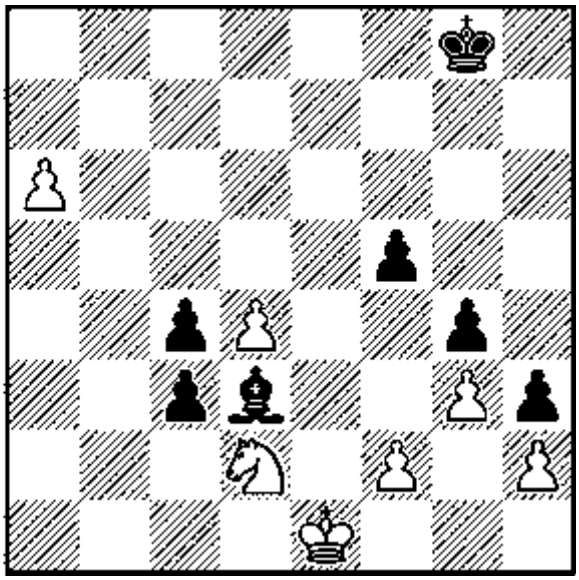
1 Ne8? Bc5+ 2 Ke1 Ke4

White resigned, since the enemy king marches unhindered to g2.

He could have saved the game with a piece sacrifice: 1 N×d5! B×d5 (1…Bc5+ 2 Ne3+ Ke4 3 Bh6=) 2 Bd4 Ke4 3 Ba7. White keeps his king at g1, and his bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal. If the bishops are exchanged, we have the drawing position we already know.

Exercises

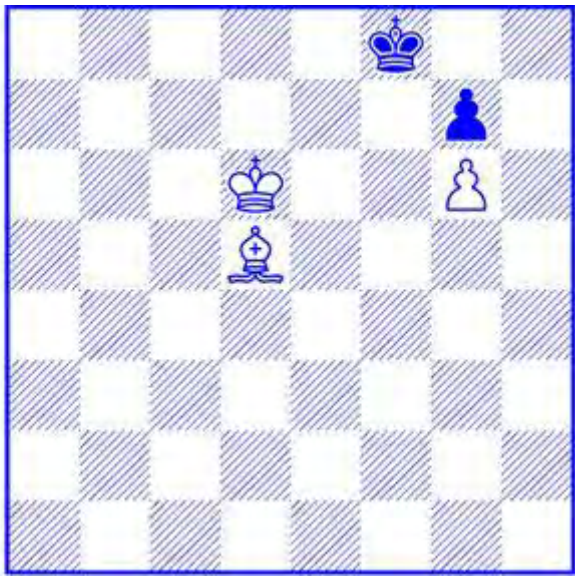
4-15



4/4
W?

Pawns at g6 and g7

4-16



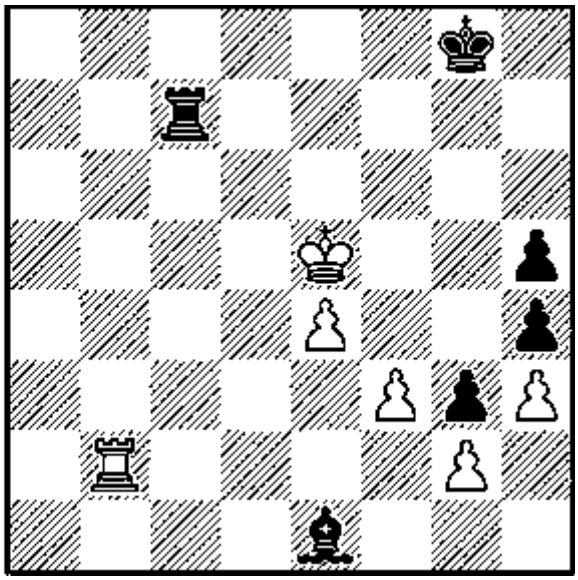
Here too the draw is obvious, and it would still be so if we added more pawn pairs at h5/h6, f5/f6, and e4/e5.

Tragicomedies

Polugaevsky – Zakharov
USSR ch, Leningrad 1963

4-17

B



1…Bc3+ 2 Kd6 B×b2?

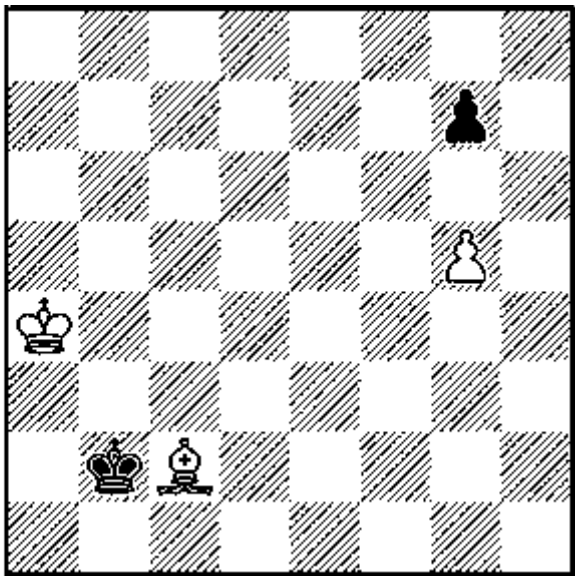
After 2…Ra7, Black would soon have won with his extra bishop. The text allows White to set up an elementary fortress.

3 K×c7 Kf7 4 Kd6 Kf6 5 Kd5 Kg5 6 Kc4

Draw. The king has managed to get home in time from his far-flung peregrinations (6…Kf4 7 Kd3=).

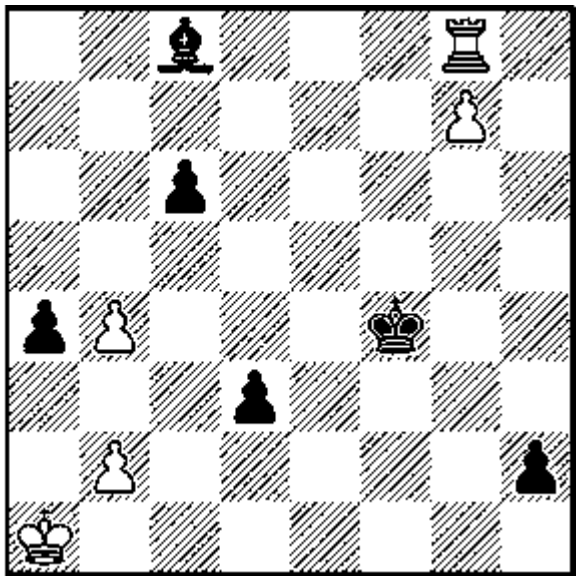
Exercises

4-18



4/5
W?

4-19

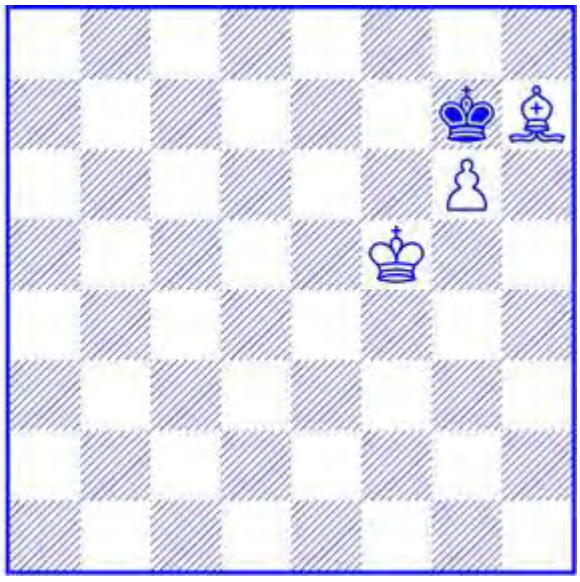


4/6
W?

Bishop at h7 and Pawn at g6

D. Ponziani, 1782

4-20



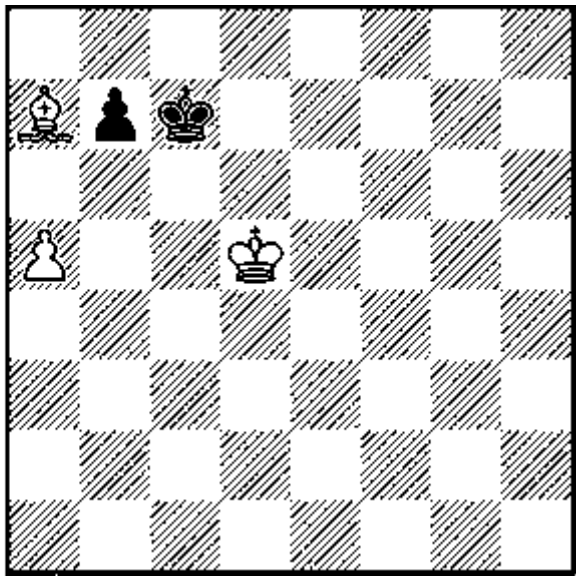
This drawing position has been known since the 18th century. The bishop cannot escape from its corner; and giving it up leads to a drawn pawn ending.

1 Kg5 Kh8 2 Bg8 K×g8 3 Kh6 Kh8=.

Tragicomedies

Paulsen – Metger
Nürnberg 1888

4-21



W?

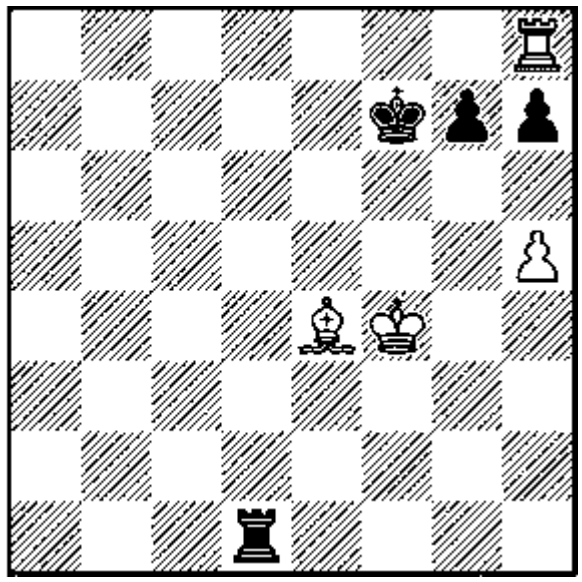
After **1 Kc4?? b5+!** (but not 1…b6? 2 a6!+–), the draw would have been inescapable, since either Black's king reaches the corner not controlled by the bishop (2 K×b5 Kb7), or Ponziani's position is reached (2 ab+ Kb7).

The same result is reached after 1 Kc5? b6+!.

The winning move was 1 Kd4! Kc6 (1…b5 2 a6 Kc6 3 Kc3 or 1…b6 2 a6 Kc6 3 Kc4) 2 Bb6! (2 Kc3? b6! 3 a6 Kb5=) 2…Kd6 (2…Kb5 3 Kd5 Ka6 4 Kd6) 3 Kc4 Kc6 4 Kb4 Kd7 5 Kc5 Kc8 6 Ba7 Kc7 7 Kb5 Kd7 8 Bb8 Kc8 9 Bf4 Kd7 10 Kb6 Kc8 11 Be5+–.

Sax – Kovacevic
Sarajevo 1982

4-22



W

White has good chances for success. One very strong line is 1 Ke5! Re1 2 Rc8 Re2 3 Rc7+ Kf8 4 Kd5 △ 5 B×h7. Another way of threatening the h7-pawn would be 1 Kg3!.

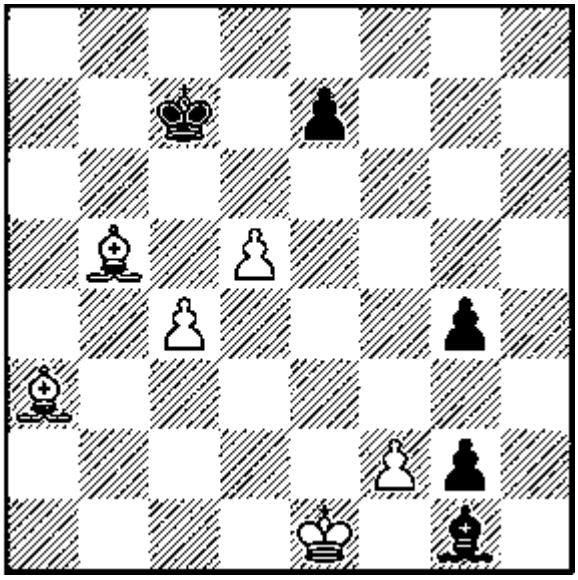
But the immediate capture of this pawn is a terrible mistake.

1 B×h7? (1 R×h7? Kg8=) **1…g5+!! 2 hg+** (2 K×g5 Kg7=) **2…Kg7 3 Rg8+ Kh6** It turns out that even adding rooks does not change the evaluation of Ponziani's position – White can neither queen the pawn nor free his bishop.

4 Rc8 Kg7 5 Bg8 Rf1+ 6 Ke5 Re1+ 7 Kd6 K×g6, and the game was soon drawn.

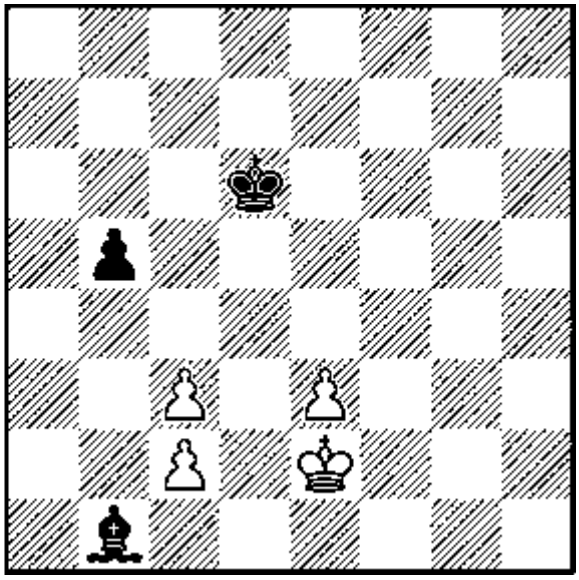
Exercises

4-23



4/7
W?

4-24



4/8
W?/Play

Bishop vs. Disconnected Pawns

M. Dvoretsky, 2000

4-25

W?

The primitive 1 Bf6? f4 2 Kd6 f3 3 Bd4 leads to a loss after 3…c3! In chess jargon, this situation is referred to as ***"the pants"***: the bishop stops pawns on two different diagonals, but

advancing one of the pawns means the bishop must give up its guard over the other. This is the same sort of "pants" situation that could have arisen in the Gutman-Mikenas game (Diagram 4-6) after the correct 1 e6 or 1 h6.

Sometimes, the bishop is not holding a passed pawn on one of the two diagonals, but defending its own pawn, or some other important point. For all practical purposes, this is the same thing: advancing a pawn pulls the bishop away from fulfilling its other obligation. An example of this might be Smyslov's study (Exercise 4/4).

Keep in mind also that there are other ways to exploit a "torn" bishop. Sometimes, it may be driven away from the intersection of two diagonals by the king, or forced to move away by means of zugzwang.

Return to the position above. White saves himself with a pawn sacrifice:

1 g6! (△ 2 g7) **1…fg 2 Bg5**=

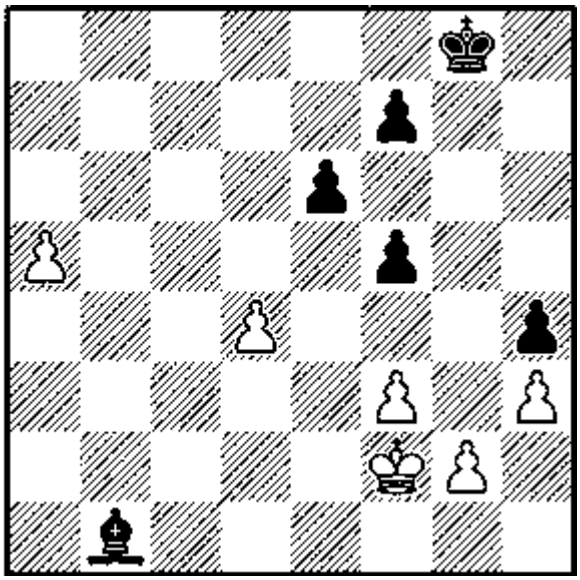
The one-diagonal principle! The bishop now fulfills both functions from a single diagonal, c1-h6, which allows White to draw without difficulty.

Rather than taking the pawn, Black could try 1…f6!?, hoping to get "the pants" after 2 B×f6? f4. But by continuing 2 Kd6! Kf8 (2…f4? is bad in view of 3 Be7! f3 4 Ke6 f2 5 g7+–) 3 Kd5(c5) instead, White draws.

Tragicomedies

Ilyin-Zhenevsky – Miasoedov
Leningrad 1932

4-26



W

Black should have an uncomplicated win with his extra piece. For instance, on 1 Ke3, he has the strong continuation 1…Ba2 2 Kf4 f6! 3 g4 hg 4 K×g3 e5 5 de fe 6 Kh4 e4 7 fe fe 8 Kg3 Bd5 (of course not 8…Bc4 9 Kf4 Bd3?? 10 a6=) 9 Kf4 Kg7 10 a6 Kg6 11 a7 Kh5. White is helpless in this variation, because the bishop holds the a-pawn while defending its own pawn on one diagonal, a8-h1.

Ilyin-Zhenevsky tries one last chance:

1 d5! Bd3?

This error costs Black the win. Of course, 1…ed?? 2 a6 is bad, since the pawn cannot be stopped; but he had to fix the kingside with 1…f4! After 2 a6 Ba2 3 de (3 d6 Kf8) 3…fe 4 a7 Bd5 5 Ke2 e5, or 2 Ke2 e5! 3 a6 Ba2 4 d6 Kf8, the struggle is over. Now, on the other hand, it is just beginning.

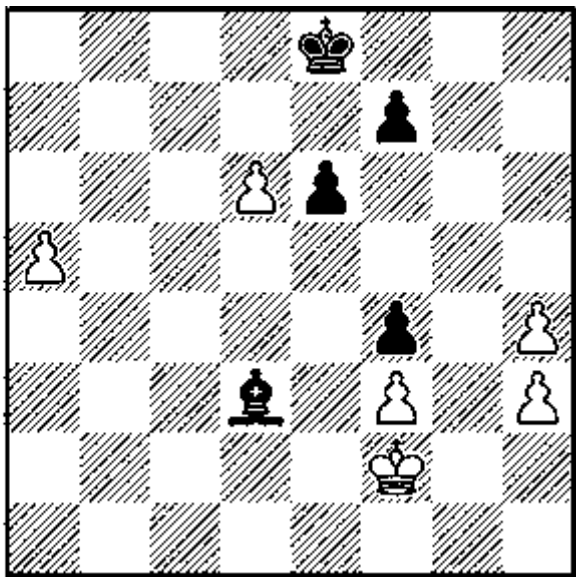
2 d6 Kf8 3 g3!

Now in addition to the a-pawn, White will have a passed h-pawn, which the bishop will be helpless against ("the pants"!). The question now will be whether Black will have time to capture the d6-pawn, stop one rook pawn with his king, and the other with his bishop.

The solution is 3…hg+ 4 K×g3 Ke8 5 h4 Kd7 6 h5 K×d6 7 h6 (7 f4? Ke7) 7…f4+! (7…Ke7? 8 a6+–; 7…Kc6? 8 f4+–) 8 K×f4 f6 9 Ke3 Bf5. But with 10 a6 Kc6 11 a7 Kb7 12 Kd4 K×a7 13 Kc5 Kb7 14 Kd6 Kb6 15 Ke7 Kc5 16 K×f6 Kd6 17 f4 Kd5 18 Kf7, White gets a draw. On 18…Ke4 there follows 19 h7 – the bishop is torn between two diagonals.

3…f4?? 4 gh Ke8

4-27



W?

Black obviously had 5 h5? Kd7 6 h6 K×d6 7 a6 Kc6–+ in mind. Unfortunately, a major disappointment awaits him.

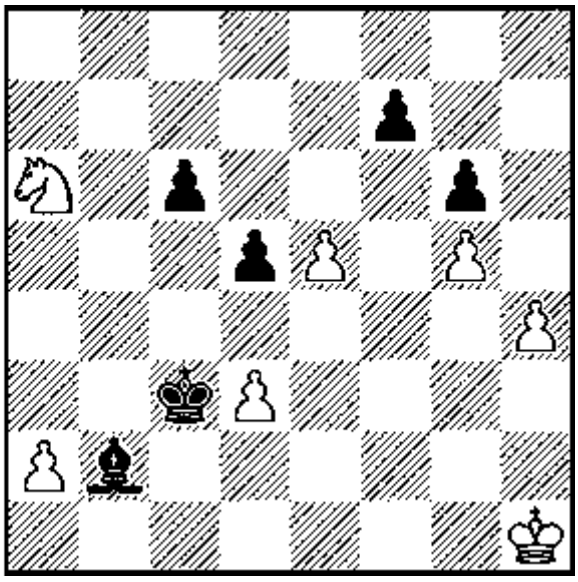
5 Ke1!

The king can drive the bishop from the d3-square, the point of intersection of the two diagonals; this will inescapably result in one of the two pawns going on to queen.

5…e5 (5…Kd7 6 Kd2 Ba6 7 h5+–) **6 Kd2 e4 7 h5 Bb1 8 a6**, and White won.

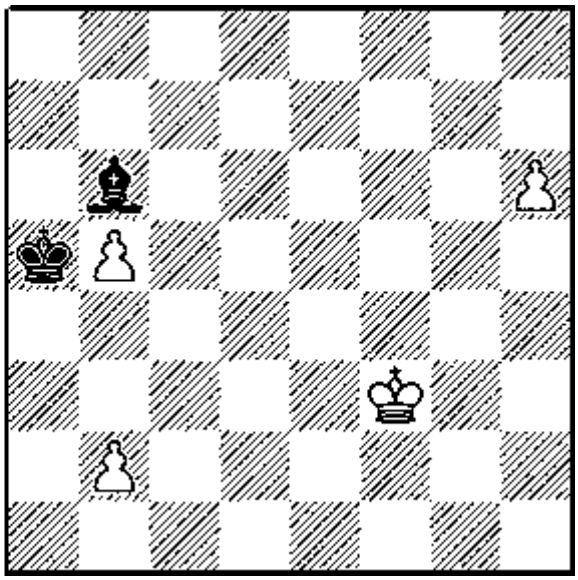
Exercises

4-28



4/9
W?

4-29



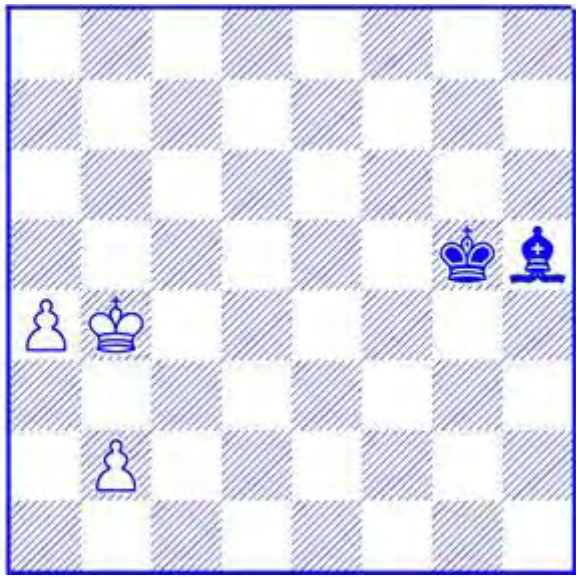
4/10
W?/Play

Bishop vs. Connected Pawns

The following instructive ending demonstrates the most important ideas for positions involving connected pawns.

Gavrikov – Chikovani
USSR 1979

4-30



W

First, we examine 1 Kc5 Kf6 2 Kd6 (shouldering). White's plan works after 2…Kf7? 3 b4 Ke8 4 Kc7 Bd1 5 b5+–.

In response, Black employs a standard technique, which I call ***"pawns in the crosshairs"*** – attacking the enemy pawns with the bishop. The point to this attack is either to force the pawns to advance, which aids in the task of their subsequent blockade (as in the present example), or else to tie the king to their defense.

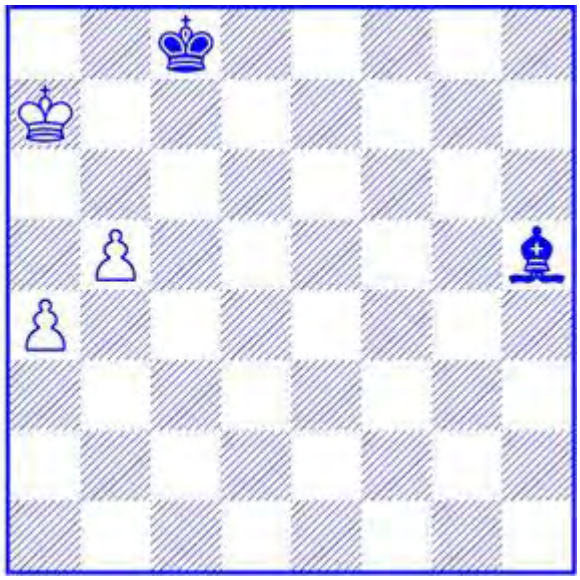
2…Bd1! 3 a5 Be2 4 b4 Bf1 5 Kc6 Ke7 6 b5 Kd8= (or 6…B×b5+).

In the game, White tried a different plan.

1 Ka5 Kf6 2 b4

How does Black defend now? The attempt to put the king in front of the pawns (as he did after 1 Kc5) no longer works: 2…Ke7 3 b5 Kd7? (3…Bd1? 4 b6! Kd7 5 Ka6+–; 3…Kd6!) 4 Ka6! (but not 4 Kb6? Bd1! 5 a5 Be2= – once again, "pawns in the crosshairs") 4…Kc8 5 Ka7+–.

4-31



This scheme of interaction between king and pawns, securing their passage to the queening square, I suggest we label ***"autopilot"*** (later we shall have further reason to refer to it).

Black is saved by another, also quite widespread technique: ***"the tail-hook"*** – tying the king to the rearmost pawn from behind. We shall use this defensive method also in the "rook vs. two connected passed pawns" endings.

2…Ke5! 3 b5 Kd4 4 Kb6

White can no longer go on autopilot: 4 b6 Bf3 5 Ka6 Kc5 6 a5 Kb4!, or 5 Kb5 Be2+ 6 Kc6 Kc4, followed by 7…Bf3+.

4…Bf3 (4…Kc4 transposes) **5 a5 Kc4 6 a6 Kb4 7 a7**

One last task for Black. Now the waiting 7…Bg2? fails to 8 Ka6 Kc5 9 b6 Bf1+ 10 Kb7 Bg2+ 11 Kc7+–.

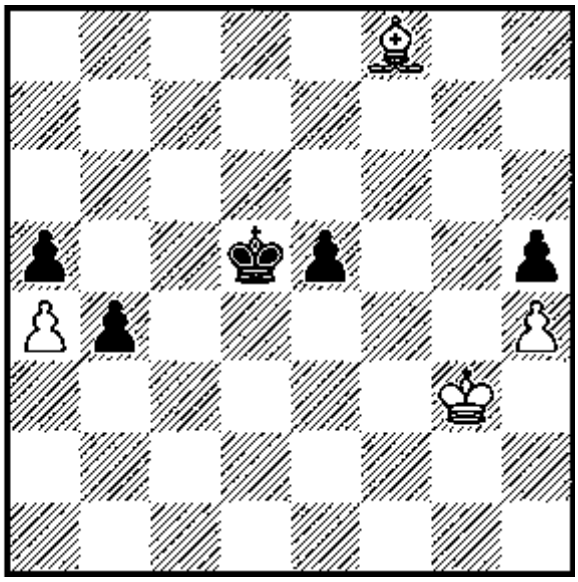
7…Ba8!

Draw, in view of 8 Ka6 Kc5 9 b6 Kc6=.

V. Zviagintsev, 1993

4-32

B?

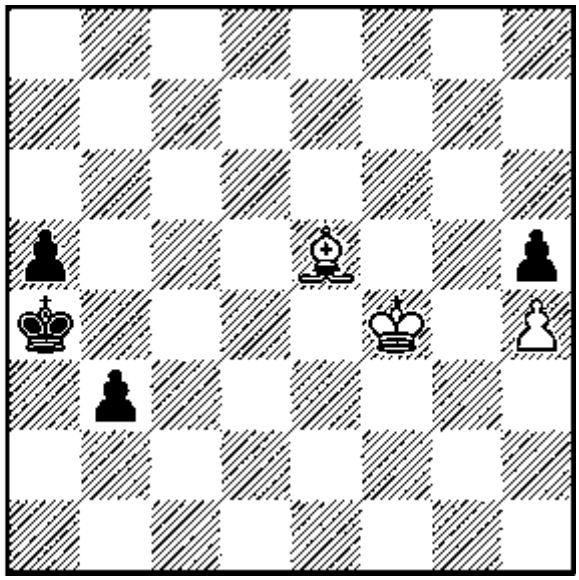


Which should Black aim for: the separated passed pawns on the b- and e-files, or two connected passed pawns, after he captures the a-pawn? Let's examine both plans:

(1) 1…Kc4 2 Bd6□ (2 Bg7? Kd4 3 Bf8 b3 4 Ba3 Kc3–+) 2…Kb3 3 B×e5 K×a4 4 Kf4. If now 4…Ka3, then 5 Kg5! b3 6 K×h5 a4 7 Kg4 Ka2 (7…b2 8 B×b2+ K×b2 9 h5) 8 h5 a3 9 h6=.

Let's look at the attempt to save a tempo by playing 4…b3.

4-33



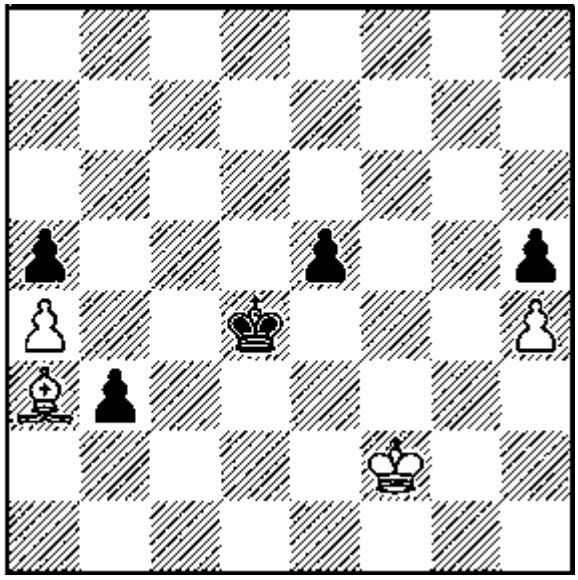
W?

It would be justified after 5 Ke3? Ka3!–+ (autopilot) or 5 Kg5? Kb5! (indicated by Müller; 5…Kb4? 6 K×h5 a4 7 Bd6+! gives only a draw) 6 Kf4 (6 K×h5 a4–+) 6…a4 7 Ke3 Kb4! 8 Kd2 Ka3 and 9…Ka2–+. The correct way is 5 Bb2! Kb4 6 Ke4, and now 6…a4? even loses after 7 Kd3 a3 (7…Kc5 8 Kc3) 8 Bg7+–. But the position remains drawn after 6…Kc4! 7 Ke3 a4 8 Ke4 Kc5 9 Kd3 Kd5 10 Kc3 Ke4 11 Kb4 Kf5 △ 12…Kg4 (Black is just in time).

(2) 1…Kd4 2 Kf2□ (2 Kf3 would be a mistake: 2…b3 3 Ba3 Kd3–+). If Black goes back to the first plan here, by 2…Kc3 3 Bg7 Kb3 4 B×e5 K×a4, it is already too late to attack the h5-pawn; on the other hand, White's king is a bit closer to the queenside, and therefore can "grab onto the tail" of the enemy pawns and prevent the autopilot: 5 Ke3 Kb3 6 Kd4 Ka2 7 Kc4 b3 8 Kb5=.

There is also no win after 2…b3 3 Ba3.

4-34



B

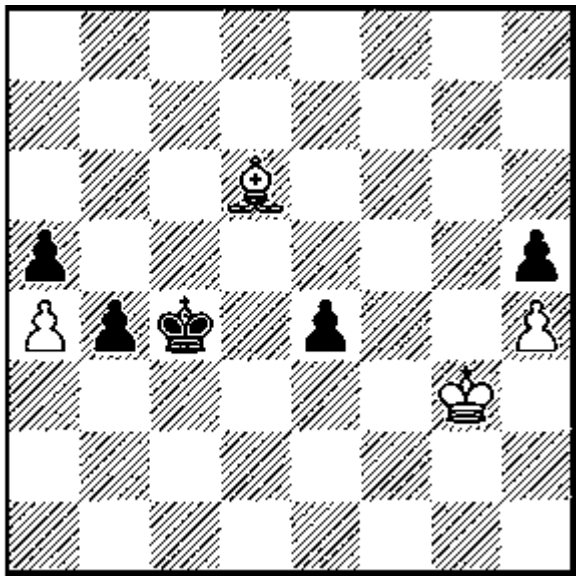
For example, 3…Kc3 4 Bd6! (it is important to drive the e-pawn closer to the white king) 4…e4 5 Ke3 b2 6 Be5+ Kc2 7 B×b2 K×b2 8 K×e4 Kb3 9 Kd4 K×a4 10 Kc4, we have a draw (remember the section "Two rook pawns with an extra pawn on the opposite wing," from the theory of pawn endgames). Nothing is changed by 3…Kd3 4 Bb2 e4 5 Bg7 Kd2 6 Bd4! (the bishop may be "torn" here, but it is impossible to put it in zugzwang – in other words, to obtain the same position, but with White to move) 6…b2 7 B×b2 e3+ 8 Kf3 e2 9 Bc3+ K×c3 10 K×e2 Kb4 11 Kd3 K×a4 12 Kc4=.

When examining the Grigoriev study in Diagram 2-12, we spoke of "strategic double attacks" – we noted that those moves and plans which pursue not just one, but two aims, are usually the most effective. Here too, we must find a way to combine both strategies, selecting one or the other depending on what our opponent does.

1…Kc4! 2 Bd6 e4!

4-35

W



The main line runs: **3 Kf2 Kb3! 4 Ke3 K×a4 5 K×e4 Ka3**

Black engages the autopilot; meanwhile, his opponent can neither counterattack on the kingside, nor “grab onto the tail” of the black pawns (which would have happened if the white bishop had stood on e5).

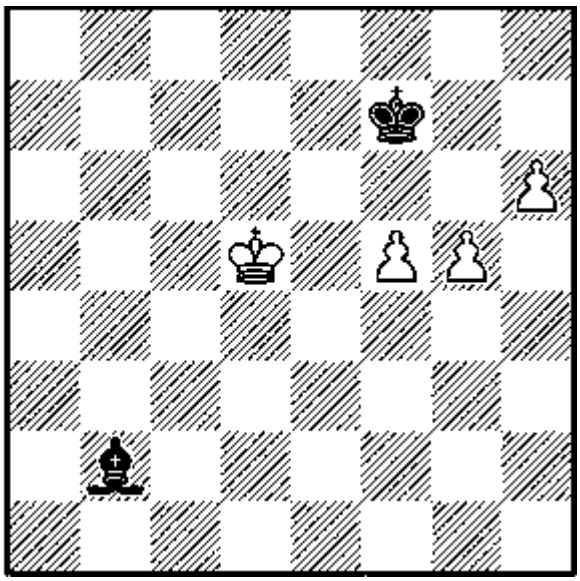
6 Kd3 Ka2 7 Kc4 b3 8 Be5 (the decisive loss of tempo) **8…a4**–+

If we save a move in this variation by playing 3 Be5, then Black’s king switches to the support of the e-pawn: 3…e3! (but not 3…Kd3? 4 Kf2=) 4 Kg2 Kd3 5 Kf1 Kd2–+. And 3 Kf4 Kd3 is just as hopeless.

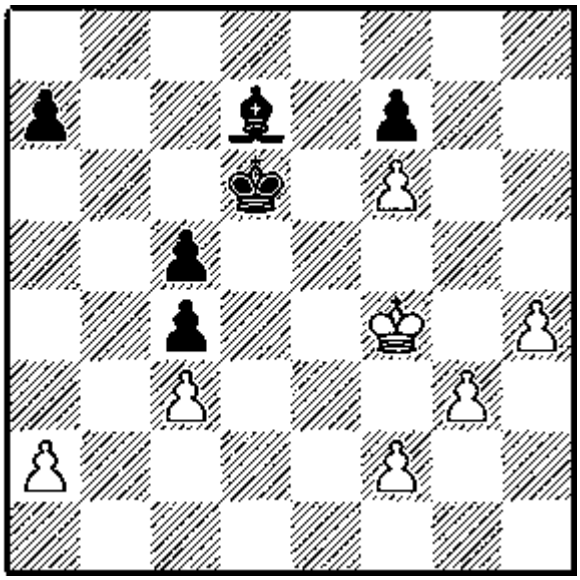
Exercises

4-36

4/11
B?



4-37



4/12
B?

Chapter 5

Opposite-Color Bishops

The Most Important Rules

Endings with opposite-color bishops are perhaps the most “strategic” of them all. My studies of these endings have taught me some rules which will help you get your bearings in nearly all such endings.

I. Drawing Tendencies

Here it is frequently possible to save oneself even two or three pawns down. The consequences of this rule are obvious: ***the stronger side must be exceptionally alert, whether going into an oppositecolor bishops endgame, or playing one out – here it does not take long to stumble on a drawing counter-chance. And for the weaker side, going into the opposite-color bishops ending is sometimes the key to salvation, sharply increasing the chances for a favorable outcome.***

II. The Fortress

The main theme of opposite-color bishops endings is that of the Fortress. The weaker side strives to create one, the stronger side strives to prevent its formation, or (if it already exists) to find a way to break through it.

An important factor in endgame play is the ability to analyze a position logically, to think through various plans and schemes. Logical thinking is of special importance in endings with oppositecolor bishops. In the majority of cases, such endings are not “played” as much as they are “constructed” – first it is necessary to determine the configuration of pawns and pieces which will render the position impenetrable; only then can we proceed with the calculation of variations which will prove whether or not we can attain the desired configuration, and whether it is in fact impenetrable.

The following rules show the most important techniques for setting up and breaking down fortresses.

III. Pawn Placement

In the next chapter, we discuss the principle that requires us to place our pawns on the opposite color squares from that controlled by our bishop. In opposite-color bishop endings, this principle only holds true for the stronger side – it is especially important with connected passed pawns.

But ***the weaker side must, contrary to the general rule, keep his pawns on the same color squares as his own bishop*** – in that event, he will usually be able to defend them. In fact, a pawn defended by its bishop can only be attacked by the enemy king – which renders it invulnerable. In other types of endgames, such a pawn could be attacked, not just by the king, but also by other pieces (such as a knight, or a bishop of the same color).

IV. Positional Nuances are Worth More than Material

When we are playing an opposite-color bishops ending, the number of pawns on the board frequently has less significance than a small alteration in the placement of pieces or pawns – even an apparently insignificant one. Therefore, ***in opposite-color bishops endgames, we quite frequently encounter positional pawn sacrifices.***

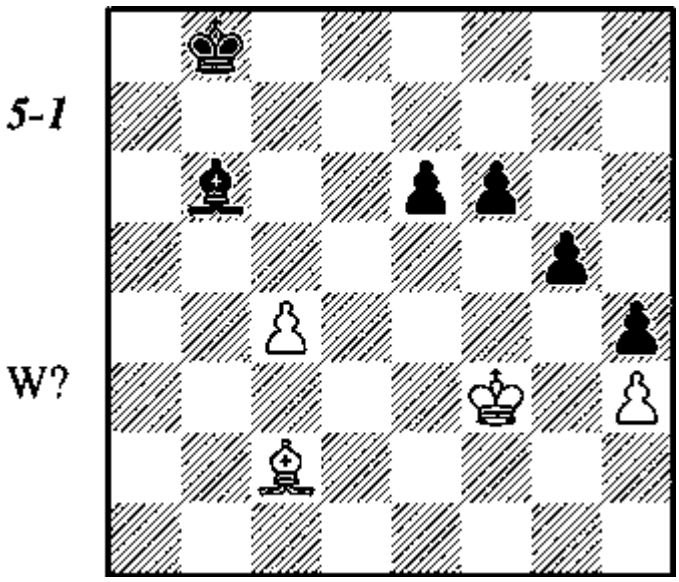
V. The One-Diagonal Principle

We have already met this principle in the “Bishop vs. Pawns” endgame (Chapter 4). ***For both the stronger and the weaker side it, is very important that the bishop should both defend its own and stop the enemy pawns “without tearing” – that is, along one and the same diagonal.***

VI. “Pawns in the Crosshairs”

A typical means of defense is for the bishop to attack the enemy pawns. This will either force their advance, to the less favorable squares of the color of their own bishop, or tie the enemy king to the pawns’ defense. This technique, like the previous one, was also studied in Chapter 4. In opposite-color bishops endgames, both techniques are used frequently.

The logical thing would be to illustrate each of these rules by concrete examples. However, that would be difficult, only because they are rarely employed separately. Consider the following simple endgame, and you will see all of the rules we have been talking about, appearing simultaneously.



1 c5! B×c5 2 Bb3 e5 3 Be6 Kc7 4 Ke4

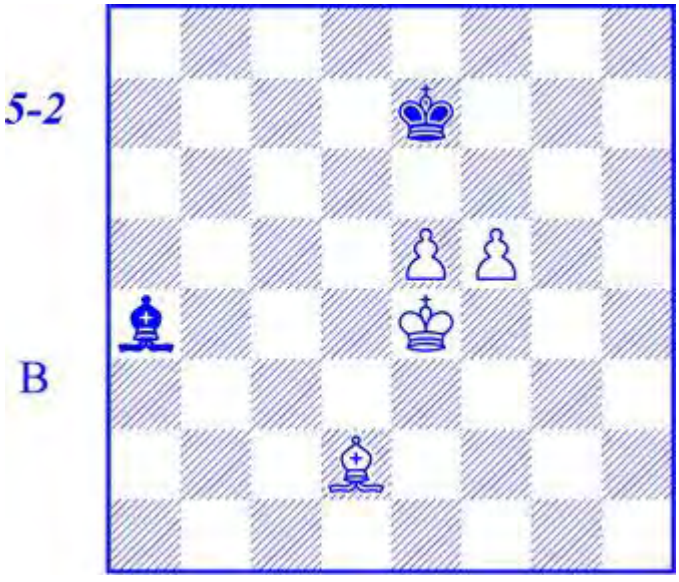
The draw is obvious – White need only run his bishop up and down the h3-c8 diagonal.

Thus, White was able to save himself – three (!) pawns down **(drawing tendency)**. The final position is a **fortress**, in which the **weaker side's only pawn is properly placed on the same color square as its own bishop.** The bishop defends its pawn at h3 and holds the enemy pawns at g5 and f6 **on the same diagonal**. White **sacrificed a pawn**, so that **by attacking the enemy's sole, well-placed pawn at e6**, he could force it to advance to a dark square, after which the pawns could be easily blockaded.

Analyzing almost any endgame in this chapter, you will see some or all of our just-formulated rules in action.

Bishop and Two Connected Pawns vs. Bishop

Careful analysis of the following basic theoretical position will familiarize us with the characteristic ideas of such endgames.



White threatens to continue e5-e6, followed by Ke5 and f5-f6. To stop this plan, Black must take the e6-square under control with his bishop. But from d7 or from b3? Let's examine both choices.

On 1…Bb3? the position is lost. First, White gives a ***probing check***, to see which way the enemy king goes. ***It is important to have the bishop prevent it from getting between the pawns after* e5-e6.** Therefore, 2 Bg5+!.

Then, ***the white king goes to help the e-pawn from the side opposite the one the enemy king went to***. For example: 2…Kf7 3 Kd4 Ba2 4 Kc5 Bb3 (4…Bb1 5 e6+ and 6 f6) 5 Kd6 and 6 e6+. Or 2…Kd7 3 Kf4 Ba2 4 Bh4 Bf7 5 Kg5 Ke7 6 Kh6+ Kd7 7 Kg7 Bc4 8 Kf6 and 9 e6+, winning.

Note that the bishop check from the other side is ineffective: 2 Bb4+ Kf7! 3 Kd4? Bc2! 4 e6+ Kf6 5 e7 Ba4, and draws. ***As soon as the pawns are blocked on the same color squares as their bishop, the draw becomes obvious.***

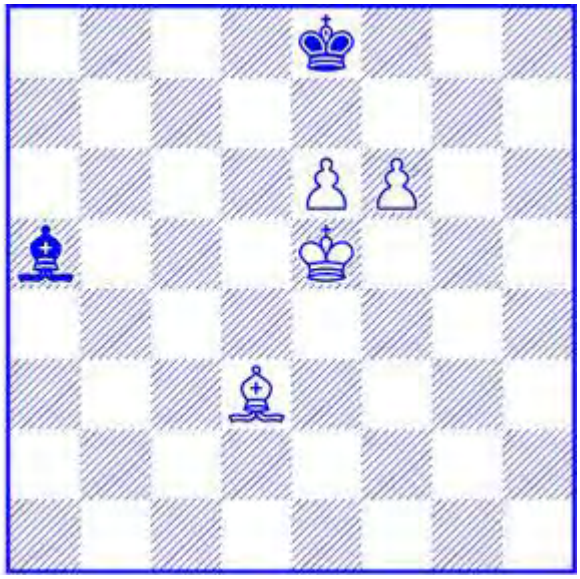
So with his bishop on b3, Black loses. But he gets an easy draw after **1…Bd7! 2 Bg5+ Kf7.** Now Black merely waits, shuttling the bishop back and forth between c8 and d7. In order to prepare e5-e6, White needs to maneuver his king left. But this is impossible, as long as the king is tied to the defense of the f5-pawn.

Which suggests a rule: ***The bishop must be placed where it prevents the advance of one of the pawns while simultaneously attacking the other.***

Let's use the ideas from the position we just looked at to analyze other positions.

Move all the pieces one rank further up. What has changed?

5-3

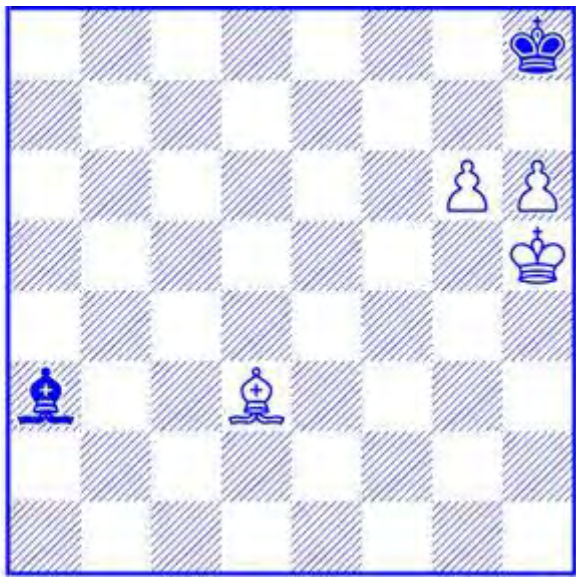


B

On 1…Bb4, nothing. White wins by the exact same method (check, followed by a king outflanking); here, both checks – from g6 or b5 – are equally good.

After **1…Bd8 2 Bg6+** (or 2 Bb5+) **2…Kf8 3 Kf5**, Black loses because of zugzwang – compared to the previous position, he no longer has any waiting moves with his bishop.

5-4

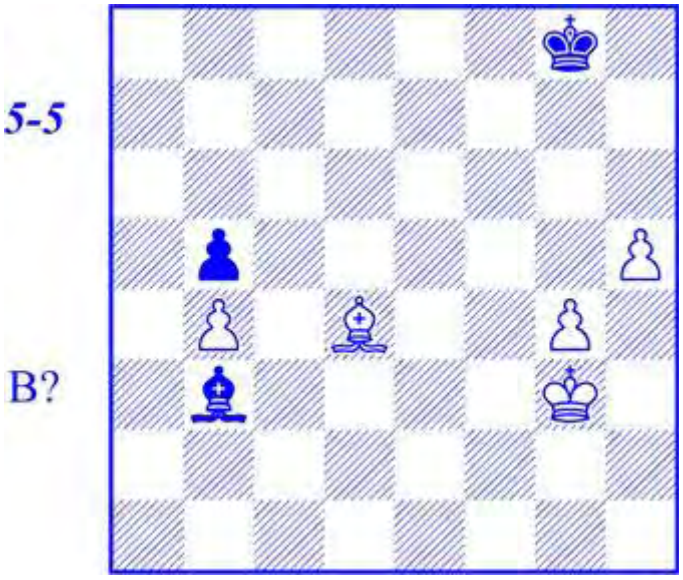


B?

Being at the edge of the board introduces new elements into the assessment of the position. Let's try 1…Bb2. If Black could follow up with 2…Kg8 and 3…Kf8, the draw would be obvious. With the king on f8, White's only plan – an outflanking to the right with the king – is impossible, because the board's edge gets in the way.

But White to move locks the enemy king in the corner by 2 Bc4!, and then carries out an outflanking to the left by Kg4-f5-e6-f7.

After **1…Bf8!**, the outflanking is now impossible; but how about threatening zugzwang? In order to force the enemy into zugzwang, White must take away the g8-square from the king with **2 Bc4**. However, after **2…B×h6! 3 K×h6**, it is stalemate.



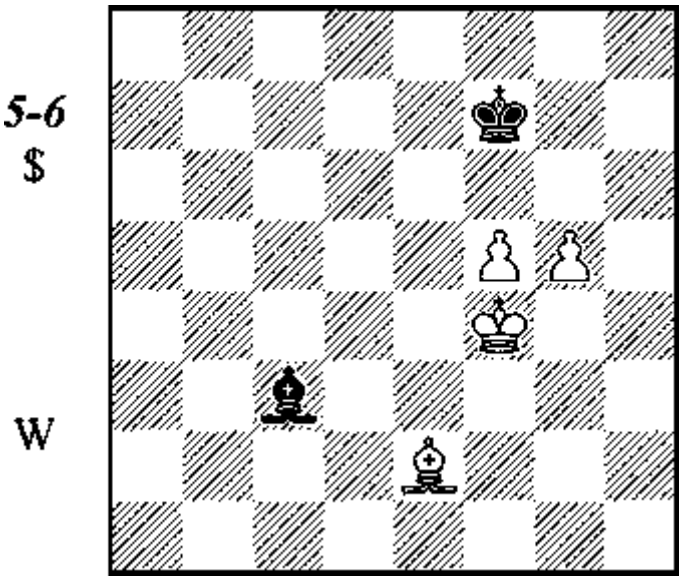
In all the endings we have so far analyzed, the defending side tried to give up its bishop for the two pawns. Here, this defensive plan is obviously insufficient. So does that mean that Black is doomed? As it turns out, no: the wing pawns can be stopped without recourse to a bishop sacrifice.

1…Bd1! ("pawns in the crosshairs") **2 Kh4** (how else does he get in g4-g5?) **2…Kf7 3 g5 Ke6! 4 g6 Kf5!**

White cannot advance either his king (the edge of the board gets in the way), or the h-pawn. And on 5 g7 Bb3 and 6…Bg8 blocks the enemy pawns securely on white squares.

Let's look at a more complex case.

M. Henneberger, 1916



Black's bishop is not ideally posted – it should be at either e7 or d8. In the basic theoretical position we started with, White won easily against such a bishop. Proceeding logically, it would

seem that only one circumstance could hinder the execution of the standard winning plan, and that is the nearness of the board's edge. Let's see:

"According to the rules," one should first check on h5, in order to control the g6-square. Black retreats his king to e7, forcing White's king to go on a right-hand outflanking, where there is little room to maneuver.

1 Bh5+ Ke7! (on 1…Kg7? 2 Ke4, Black does not have the same resources to prevent a left-hand outflanking) 2 Kg4 Bb2 3 Bg6 (there is no other way of making progress; but now the g6-square is not available to the king) 3…Bc3 4 Kh5 (threatening 5 Kh6, 6 Bh5 etc.) 4…Bg7! 5 Bh7 Kf7! 6 Bg6+ Ke7, and White cannot reach his goal of preparing f5-f6+.

And the bishop check on the other diagonal we already know gives nothing: 1 Bc4+ Kg7! 2 Ke4 Bd2! 3 f6+ Kg6.

However, White's resources for playing to win are not yet exhausted. We could decoy the king to g7 first, and then put the bishop on the e8-h5 diagonal, thus preparing a left-hand outflanking by the king.

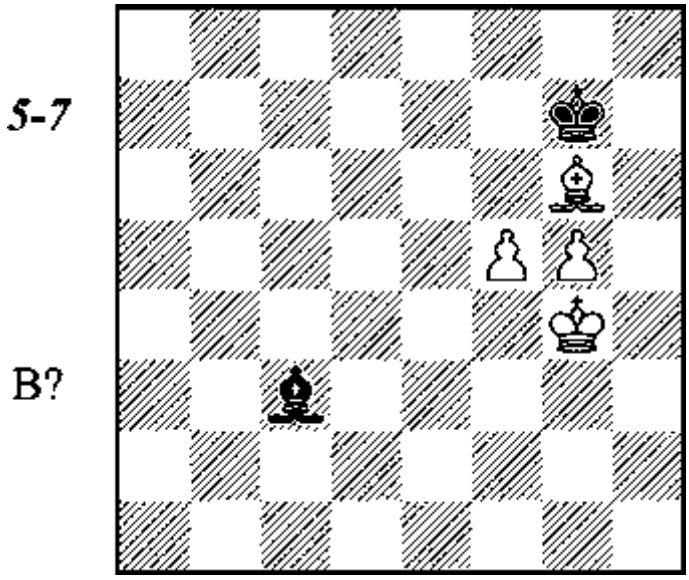
1 Kg4 Bb2 2 Kh5 Kg7!

White threatened 3 Kh6; 2…Bg7? is bad, because of 3 Bc4+ and 4 Kg6.

3 Bb5 Bc3 4 Be8 Bd4 (4…Kf8 5 Bg6 Kg7 is the same thing) **5 Bg6**

On 5 Kg4 (threatening 6 Bh5, 7 Kf3, 8 Ke4 etc.) Black's king has enough time to relocate to e7: 5…Kf8! 6 Bh5 Ke7, transposing to the first variation.

5…Bc3 6 Kg4



White's plan appears triumphant: 6…Kf8 7 f6 is bad; and on other moves, White plays 7 Bh5. But as Berger pointed out, at precisely this moment, the black bishop succeeds in reaching its destined spot.

6…Ba5!!

With White's bishop at g6, he no longer has 7 f6+.

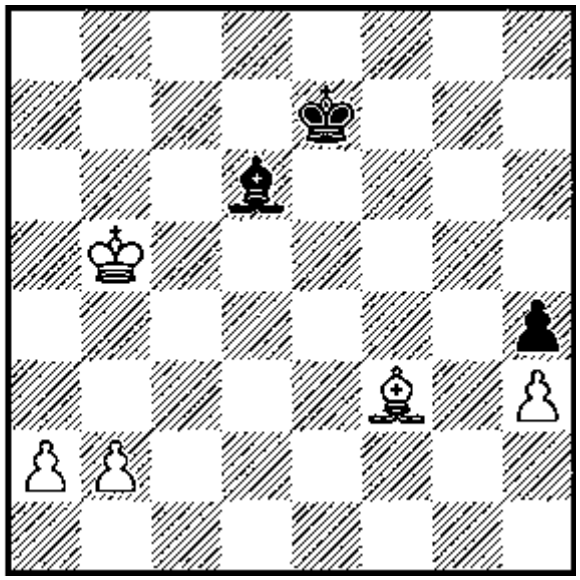
7 Bh5 Bd8

And Black has set up the basic fortress draw of this type of ending.

Tragicomedies

Walther – Fischer
Zürich 1959

5-8



B?

Black dreams of giving up his bishop for the queenside pawns. Then his king would go to h8, and even if it cannot, we have Rauzer's drawing position (Diagram 4-2).

White's goal is to put his king at a6 and his pawn at b5. This situation ("autopilot") is known to us from the section on bishop vs. connected passed pawns from Chapter 4.

1…Kd7??

Black had to employ the "pawns in the crosshairs" technique: 1…Bf4! 2 b4 Bd2 3 a3 Bc1! 4 a4 Bd2! 5 Kc5 Kd7 (pointed out by Solomon). After 6 a5 (6 b5 Be3+ 7 Kc4 Kd6 8 a5 Bd2 9 a6 Be3=) 6…Kc7 7 Kb5 Be1 8 Ka4 Bd2 9 b5, Black defends himself similarly to Diagram 5-5: 9…Kd6! 10 b6 Kc5=.

2 a4??

White errs in return. The winning line was 2 b4! Kc7 3 Ka5! Kb8 (3…Bg3 4 b5 Bf2 5 Ka6 △ a4-a5) 4 b5 (Black does not have time to prevent b5-b6) 4…Ba3!? 5 b6 Kc8 6 Ka6 Kb8 7 Be4⊙ Kc8 (7…Bc5 8 a4) 8 Ka7 Bc5 9 a4+– (pointed out by the Swiss problemist Fontana).

2…Kc7

A simpler draw could probably have been obtained by 2…Bg3!? 3 Kb6 (3 b4 Be1) 3…Bf2+! 4 Kb7 Be1.

3 b4 Kb8!

By tucking his king at a7, Fischer gains control of a6, which prevents his opponent from going on autopilot.

4 a5 Ka7 5 Kc4 Bg3 (5…Bc7) **6 Kb3**

If 6 b5, then 6…Be1 7 b6+ Ka6=.

6…Be1 7 Ka4 Bd2 8 Bh5 Be1 9 b5 Bf2! 10 Be2

On 10 b6+ B×b6 11 ab+ K×b6, the king goes to h8. Also useless is 10 Bf3 Be3 11 Kb3 Bd2.

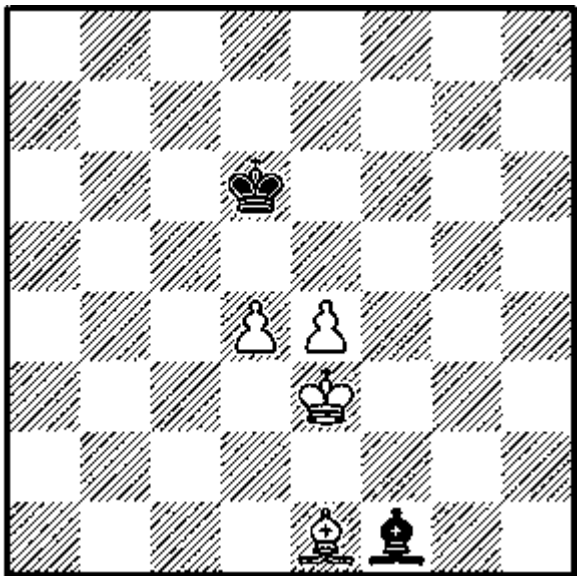
10…Be3 11 Kb3 Bd2!

Black allows his opponent to advance the pawn to b6, so as to reach the defensive position of Diagram 5-5.

12 b6+ Kb7 13 Ka4 Kc6! 14 Bb5+ Kc5 15 Be8 Be1 Draw.

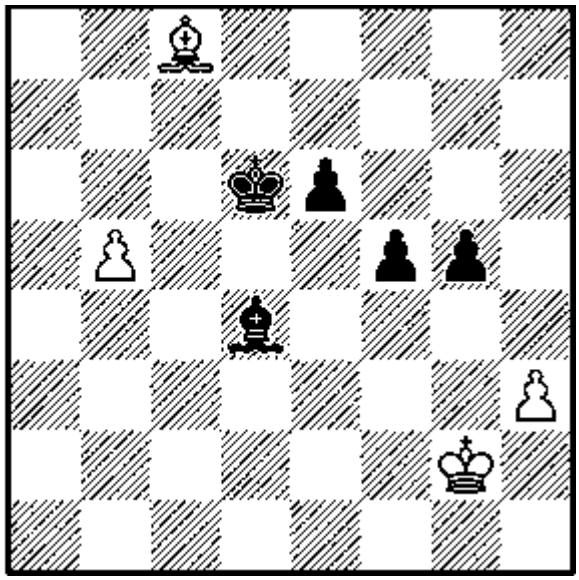
Exercises

5-9



5/1
B?

5-10



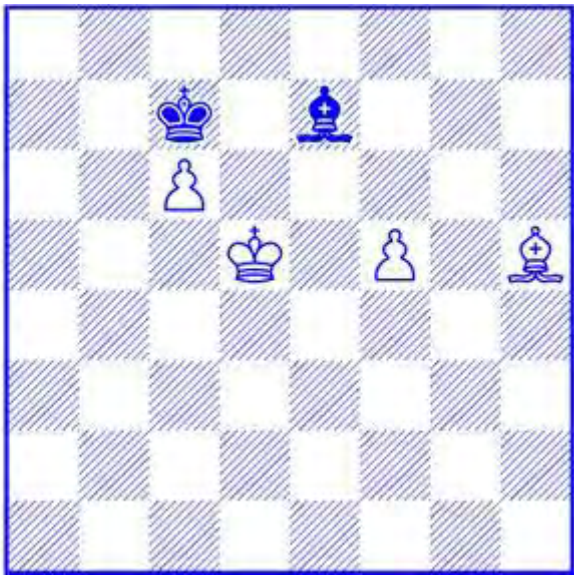
5/2
W?

Separated Passed Pawns

With separated passed pawns, the stronger side's strategy is always one and the same: the king goes toward the pawn that the bishop is holding back.

C. Salvioli, 1887

5-11



W

1 Bf3 Kd8 2 Ke6 Bb4 3 f6 Ba5 4 f7 Bb4 5 Kf6 Bc3+ 6 Kg6 Bb4 7 Kg7+–.

It is interesting to analyze those situations in which it is impossible to realize a material advantage. Here are some instances:

If one of the pawns is a rook pawn, and the bishop does not control the queening square, the draw can be secured by blocking that pawn with the king and sacrificing the bishop for the other.

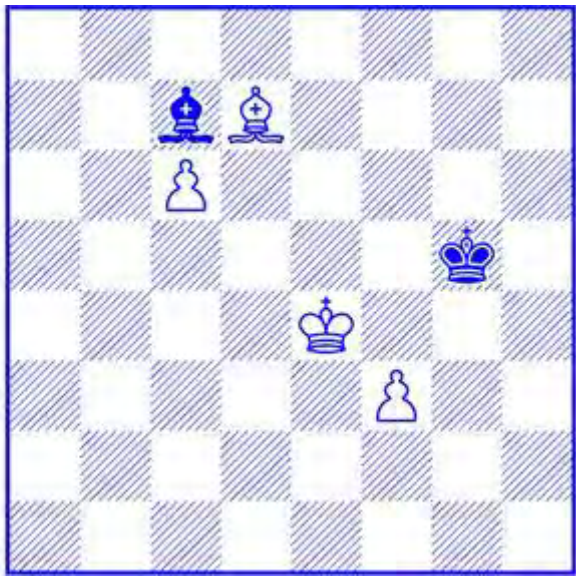
If the pawns are separated by just one file, then the stronger side will only be able to win the bishop for the two pawns (imagine white pawns at c6 and e6 with the black king at d8, and the bishop restraining the pawn which is supported by White's king).

Sometimes the weaker side's king can help the bishop defend against both pawns at once. It ***"maintains the zone"*** (an expression borrowed from hockey), by shuttling to whichever flank it is needed to prevent the enemy king from invading its territory. This kind of defense is very important when the pawns are split.

The next diagram offers a very simple example.

Y. Averbakh, 1950

5-12

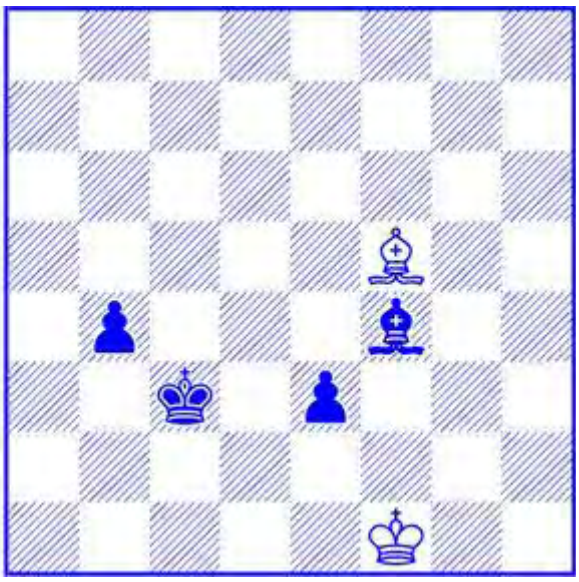


The draw is obvious: **1 Kd5** is met by **1…Kf6**; if the king goes to b7, Black's king turns up at d8. Black can draw in large part because his bishop restrains both pawns along the b8-h2 diagonal.

And finally, the standard winning plan often does not work because the edge of the board is too close (for example, when one of the pawns is a knight's pawn). The following position has great practical significance.

Berger – Kotlerman
Arkhangelsk 1948

5-13



1 Ke2 b3 2 Kd1 Kb4 3 Bh7 Ka3 4 Bg6

If 4…b2 (threatening 5…Ka2), then 5 Bb1! Kb3 6 Ke2.

4…Kb2 5 Bf7!

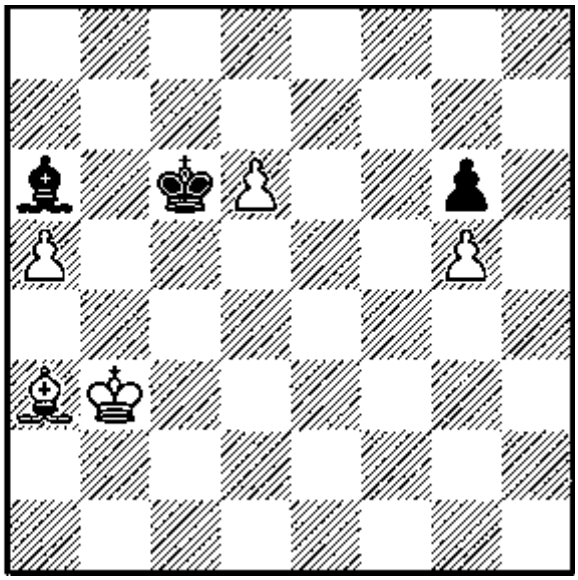
Black threatened 5…Ka1 and 6…b2. White stops this plan by attacking the b3-pawn.

5…Ka2 6 Be6 Ka3 (threatening 7…b2 8 Bf5 Ka2) **7 Bf5!** Draw.

The ideas we have examined thus far will help you orient yourself in the most varied kinds of situations with disconnected pawns – even with a large number of pawns on the board.

Y. Averbakh, 1954

5-14



B?

1…Kd7! 2 Kc3 Ke6 3 Kd4 Be2

3…Bb7 4 Kc5 Kd7 is equivalent.

4 Kc5 (△ Kc6-c7+–) **4…Bf3!**

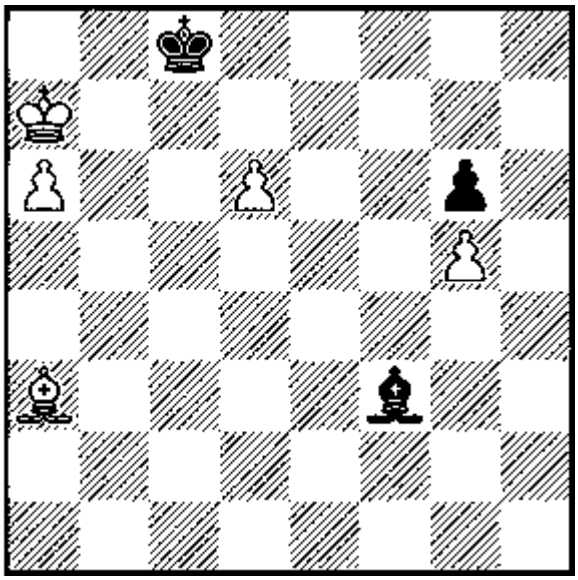
4…Kd7? would be a mistake: after 5 Kd5 Bf1 6 Ke5 Be2, when the white king gets into the kingside. Now, White will get nothing out of 7 Kf6 Bd3 8 a6? B×a6 9 K×g6 Ke8 – with the same drawing position as in the game Berger-Kotlerman (with opposite colors and reversed flanks).

The correct idea is to play for zugzwang. From d3, the bishop defends the g6-pawn on one diagonal, while on the other, it restrains the advance of the a-pawn; *ergo*, it has no moves. White's king cannot be allowed to get to e7 – that means that, in addition to d7, the black king has just two other squares: e8 and d8. We can take away the first one by putting the king on f7; the second, by moving the bishop to c7.

7 Bc5 Bf1 8 Bb6 Be2 9 Bc7 Bd3 10 Kf6 Ke8 11 Kg7⊙ Kd7 12 Kf7⊙+–.

5 a6 Kd7 6 Kb6 Kc8! (the king maintains the zone: White threatened 7 Ka7 Kc8 8 d7+! K×d7 9 Kb8+–) **7 Ka7**

5-15
$



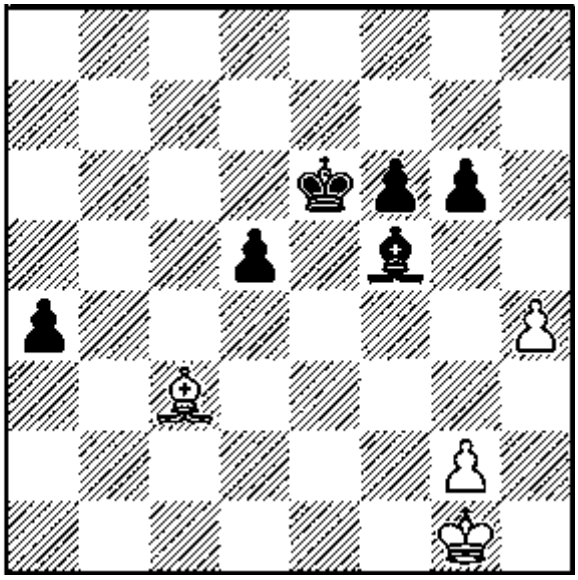
B?

Once again, Black must be accurate. After 7…Bc6? 8 Bb4, he gets into zugzwang: 8…Bd7 9 Kb6 Bf5 10 d7+! K×d7 11 Kb7, or 10…B×d7 11 a7.

7…Bg4! 8 Kb6 Bf3! 9 Kc5 Kd7! 10 Kd4 Ke6!=.

Topalov – Shirov
Linares 1998

5-16



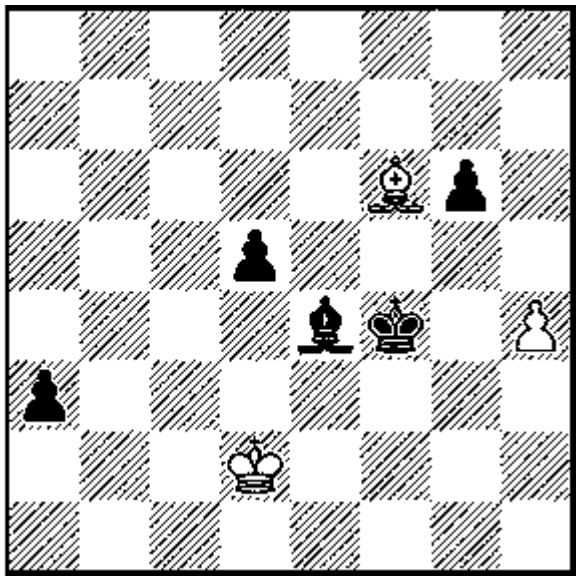
B?

"Normal" play would bring White the draw without too much trouble, for instance:

1…Kd6? 2 Kf2! (simplest – although White also does not lose after 2 B×f6 Kc5 3 Kf2 d4 4 Ke2 Kc4 5 Be7 Kc3 6 Kd1) 2…Kc5 3 Ke3=;

1…Be4? 2 Kf2 Kf5 3 g3! a3 4 Ke3 Kg4 5 B×f6 K×g3 6 Kd2 Kf4 (on 6…d4 7 B×d4 K×h4 8 Kc1 g5 9 Bc5 a2 10 Kb2, White need only give up his bishop for the g-pawn).

5-17



W

7 Be7! (while there is time, it is useful to force the enemy pawn onto the same color square as his bishop) 7…a2 8 Bf6 Bf5 9 Bg7 Ke4 10 Ba1 d4 11 Bb2 (with the pawn at a3, White would risk falling into zugzwang here) 11…d3 12 Bc3 Kf4 13 Bb2 Kg4 14 Bf6 a1Q 15 B×a1 K×h4, and we have transposed into the Berger-Kotlerman ending.

Shirov found a fantastic resolution of the position.

1…Bh3!!

The bishop is sacrificed for a single tempo – the one needed for the king to get to e4.

2 gh

2 Kf2 Kf5 3 Kf3 would not help in view of 3…B×g2+! 4 K×g2 Ke4–+.

2…Kf5 3 Kf2 Ke4! 4 B×f6

After 4 Ke2 f5, Black has too many passed pawns.

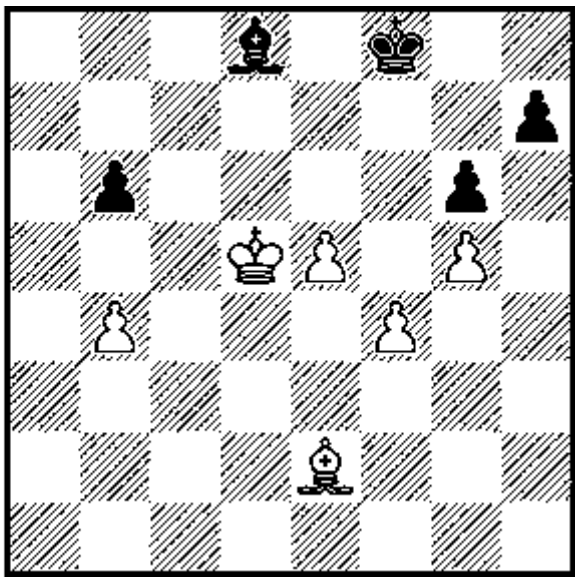
4…d4 (△ 5…a3) **5 Be7 Kd3** (threatening 6…Kc2 and 7…d3) **6 Bc5 Kc4!** (but not 6…Kc3? 7 Ke2) **7 Be7 Kb3** (7…Kc3 is just as good).

Now the king must reach c2, which gives us the “pants” situation we spoke of in Chapter 4. White resigned.

Tragicomedies

Marin – Slovineanu
Romania 1999

5-18



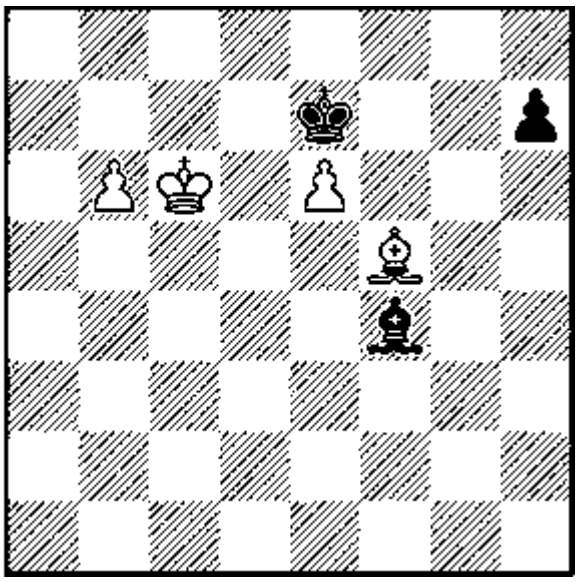
W

The game ended very quickly: **1 Kc4?! Be7 2 Kb5 Kg7 3 Bd3 h6** Draw.

Marin, in *Informant* 75, gave his 1 Kc4 two question marks. He assessed his position as

winning, and demonstrated this with the following variation: 1 Kc6 Be7 2 b5 Bc5 3 Kd7 Bb4 4 e6 Bc5 5 Bd3 Be7 6 Be4 Bc5 7 f5 gf 8 B×f5 Be7 9 Kc6! (D. Rogozenko) – apparently it was this last move, later pointed out by his colleague, that the GM failed to notice during the game – 9…B×g5 (9…Bd8 10 B×h7) 10 K×b6 Ke7 11 Kc6 Bf4 12 b6

5-19



B?

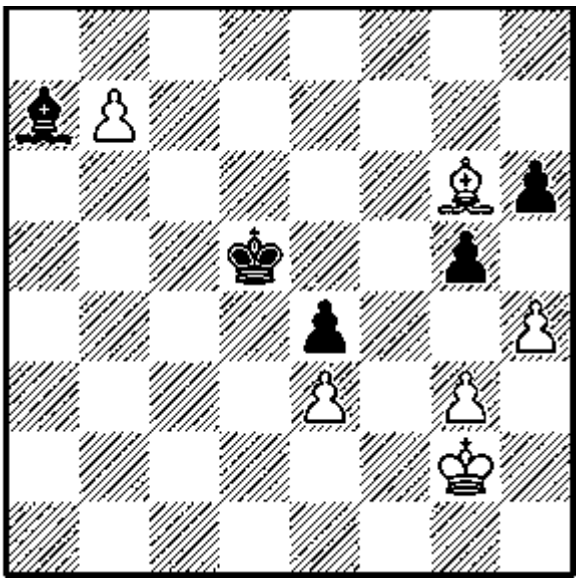
12…h5 13 Kb7 Be3 14 Kc7+–.

Evidently, neither Marin nor Rogozenko was aware of the Berger-Kotlerman endgame. Otherwise, they would clearly have seen that 12…Kd8! (instead of 12…h5??) would secure Black the draw. Actually, if he wishes, Black could even keep his h-pawn (which, in fact, has not the slightest value anyway) by playing 11…h5 (instead of 11…Bf4) 12 b6 (12 Kc7 Bf4+ 13 Kc8 Be3) 12…Kd8 13 Kb7 Be3!=, or 13 b7 Bf4 14 Kb6 Bb8!=.

Cifuentes – Langeweg

El Vendrell 1996

5-20



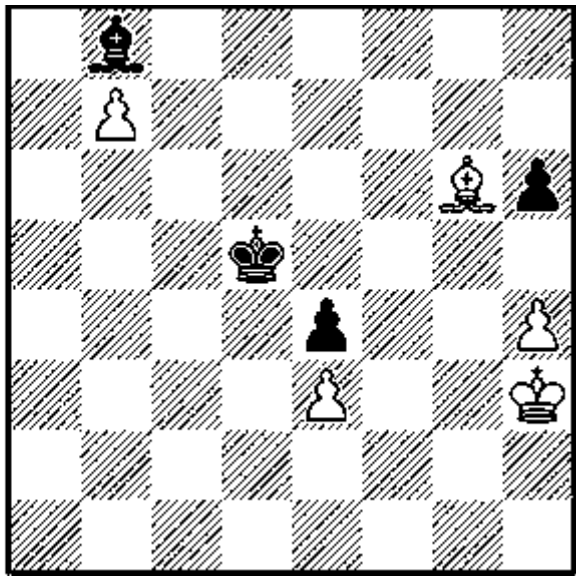
B?

1…Ke5?!

A strange move indeed! Common sense would indicate Black should exchange on h4. ***The side that is down material should usually exchange pawns whenever possible.***

Cifuentes believes that Black would stand poorly then, and demonstrates this with the following variation: 1…gh 2 gh Bb8 3 Kh3

5-21



B

3…Ba7 4 Kg4 Ke5 5 Kh5⊙ Kd5 6 Bf5! (6 K×h6? would be premature: 6…B×e3+ 7 Kg7 Ba7! 8 B×e4+ K×e4 9 h5 Kd5 10 h6 Kc6=) 6…Ke5 7 Kg6 Kd5 (7…h5 8 Bh3 Kd6 9 Bg2 Ke5 10 K×h5 Kf5 11 B×e4+!) 8 h5 Ke5 9 B×e4! K×e4 10 K×h6 B×e3+ 11 Kg6+–.

Cifuentes' analysis is completely unconvincing. Why should Black allow White's king to attack his h-pawn? For example, he could try 3…h5!? 4 B×h5 Kc6. It would be much simpler, however, to set up an impregnable fortress by giving up Black's main weakness – the e4-pawn – at once.

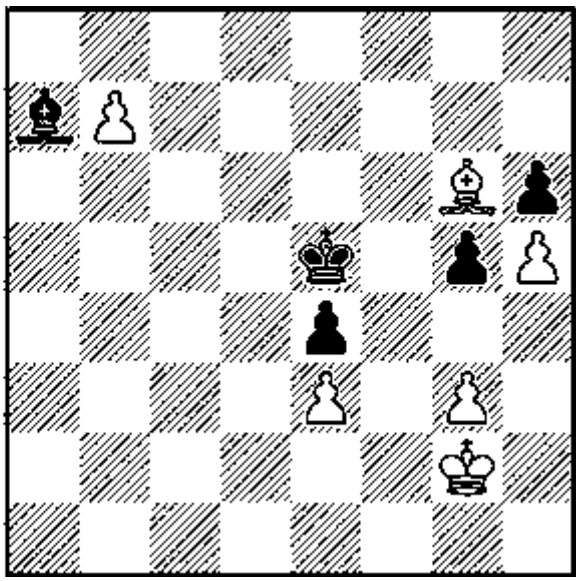
Let's continue: 3…Ke5 4 Kg4 Kf6! 5 B×e4 Bc7. Now the h-pawn is untouchable – 6 Kh5 is met by 6…Kg7. White has to bring his king to the queenside; but the most he can achieve there is the win of the bishop for his b- and e-pawns. But then Black's king goes to h8, with an elementary draw (the enemy bishop does not control the rook pawn's queening square). And this important defensive resource comes about precisely because of the exchange of pawns at h4.

Even in Cifuentes' line, 3…Ba7 4 Kg4 Ke5 5 Kh5, it is still not too late to return to the right plan: 5…Kf6!, since after 6 K×h6 (6 B×e4 Kg7=) 6…B×e3+ 7 Kh7 Bf4 8 B×e4 Bb8, White is unable to queen the h-pawn: 9 Bf3 Bc7 10 h5 Kg5 11 h6 Be5 12 Be2 Bb8 13 Kg7 Be5+.

Black's refusal to trade pawns probably stems from the fact that Langeweg did not want to free the g3-square for White's king. The king cannot approach through the h3-square, which can be seen from the line 2 Kh3 Kd6! 3 Kg4 Kc7 (3…gh) 4 h5 (4 hg hg 5 B×e4 B×e3=) 4…B×e3 (4…K×b7 5 B×e4+ Kc7=) 5 B×e4 Bd2 6 Kf5 g4!=.

2 h5!?

5-22



B?

2…Kd5?

This was, evidently, the decisive error! As Bologan pointed out, Black had a simple draw with 2…g4! followed by …Bb8. Black's king easily defends the kingside pawns (3 Be8 Kf5); and the

g3-pawn will drop as soon as the white king leaves its side.

3 g4!

After fixing the kingside, White can now direct his king to the opposite side of the board, restrict his opponent's movements, and finally break through the center to reach the weak pawn at h6.

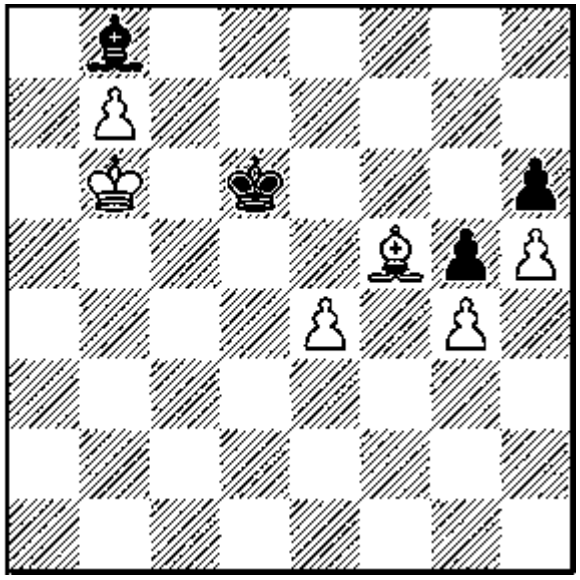
3…Ke5 4 Kf2 Bb8 5 Ke2 Ba7 6 Kd2 Kd5 7 Kc3⊙ Bb8 8 Bf7+ Kc5 9 Bg6 Kd5 10 Kb4! Bg3 11 Kb5 Bc7 12 Ka6 Bb8 13 Kb6⊙ Ke5 14 Kc6 Ke6

Black had to give up the e4-pawn anyway (because of the mortal threat of Kd7-c8), but in a far less favorable situation.

15 B×e4 Bg3 16 Bf5+ Ke7 17 Kb6 Bb8 18 e4 Kd6

5-23

W?



19 e5+! Ke7

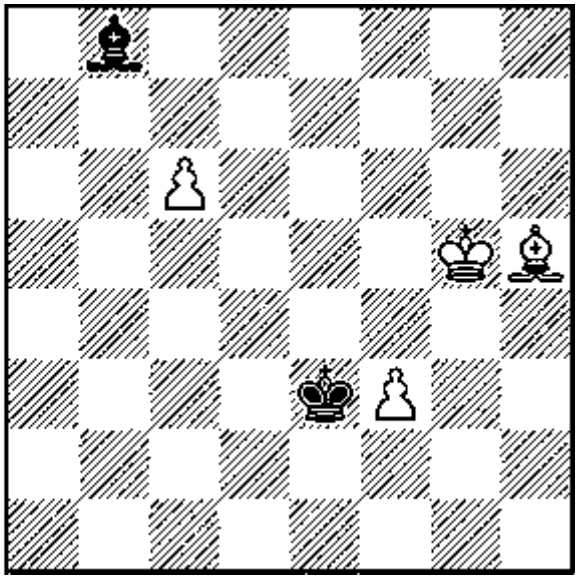
19…K×e5 loses to 20 Kc6; and if 19…Kd5, then 20 Bc8 K×e5 21 Kc6 Kf6 22 Kd7 Kf7 23 Kd8+–. Now imagine the same position, but without the g-pawns: Black could then simply capture on e5.

20 Bc2 Ke6 21 Bb3+ Ke7 22 Ba2⊙ (if 22 Kc6??, then 22…B×e5 23 Kd5 Kf6=) **22…Kd7 23 Kc5! B×e5 24 Kd5 Bf4 25 Ke4 Ke7 26 Kf5 Bc7 27 Kg6** Black resigned.

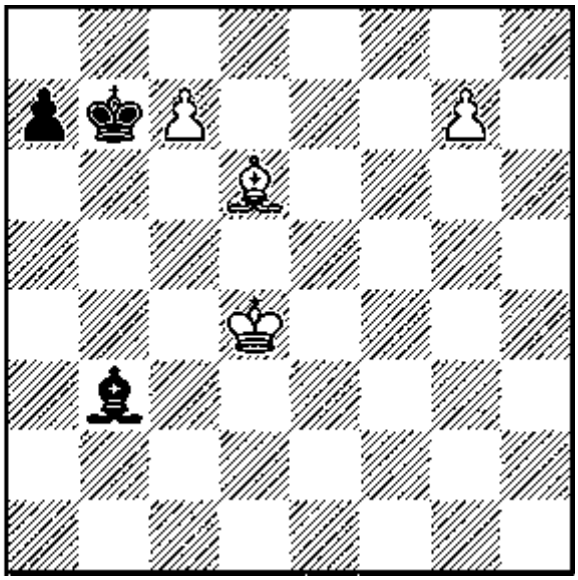
Exercises

5-24

5/3
B?



5-25



5/4
W?

The King Blockades the Passed Pawn

Quite often the stronger side will have a passed pawn, which needs to be blockaded by either the king or the bishop.

The first defensive system: The king blockades the enemy passed pawn, while the bishop defends its own pawns. This is the basic and usually the most secure defensive arrangement.

Attempts to break down the first defensive system always involve the creation of a second passed pawn, frequently by means of a pawn breakthrough.

J. Speelman

5-26

W

In such situations the bishop can easily handle the defense of the kingside, so a drawn outcome should come as no surprise.

1 f5 (the only try) **1…gf?!**

This move makes Black's task a bit more difficult. 1…Bd3!= is safer.

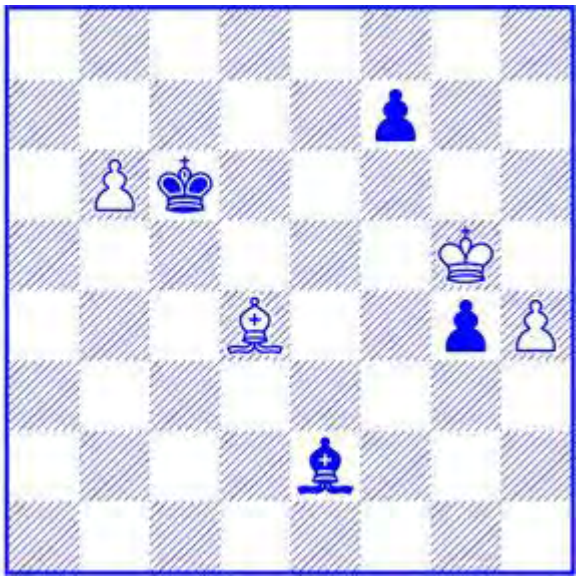
2 K×f5 Be6+! 3 Kg5 Bg4=

The assessment of the position would change if Black incautiously played 2…Kc6? (instead of 2…Be6+!):

3 Kg5 Be2 4 h3! (but not 4 Kf6 Bc4 5 h3?, in view of 5…Bf1! 6 g4 h4! 7 K×f7 B×h3 8 g5 Bf1 – the advance of the h-pawn distracts the bishop from the defense of the b6-pawn).

4…Kb7 (4…Bf1 5 g4 hg 6 h4+–) 5 Bd4 Kc6 6 g4 hg 7 h4+–.

5-27



B

White has achieved his aim: the creation of a second passed pawn!

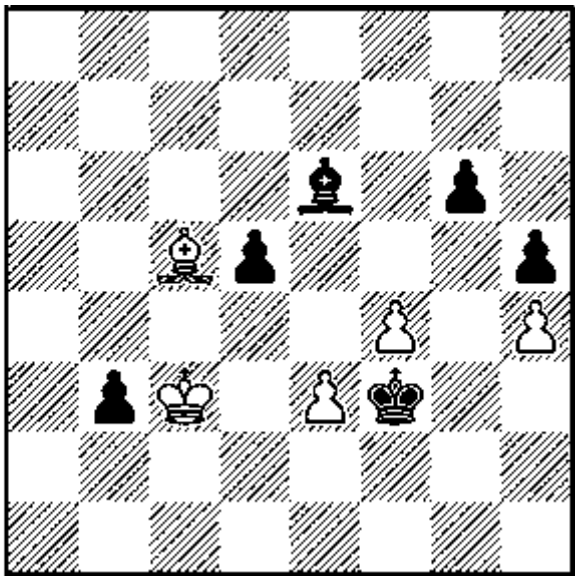
7…g3 8 Kf4 (8 h5 f6+ 9 Kg6?! is much less convincing: 9…f5 10 h6 f4 11 Kg5 f3 12 h7 f2 – White's play might be strengthened, however, by 9 Kh4!) 8…Bh5 (8…g2 9 Kg5 △ 10 h5) 9 K×g3 f6 10 Kf4 Bg6 11 Kg4 Kb7 12 h5 Bh7.

Black has set up a barrier, but one which can be overcome without much difficulty. White's king goes to a5, to free his bishop from the defense of the b6-pawn. The f6-pawn will then have to advance, and White's king will return to the kingside.

Kotov – Botvinnik

USSR ch, Moscow 1955

5-28



B?

A classic example of the destruction of the first defensive system. The decisive breakthrough aims to create a second passed pawn.

1…g5!!

A mistake would be 1…Kg4? 2 Be7=, and if 2…Kf3 (this position occurred in the game: White played Bc5?), then 3 Kd2! b2 4 Kc2 K×e3 5 K×b2 K×f4 6 Kc3=.

2 fg

Hopeless is 2 hg h4 3 f5 (3 Bd6 Bf5 4 g6 B×g6 5 f5 B×f5 6 K×b3 Kg2) 3…B×f5 4 K×b3 h3 5 Bd6 K×e3.

2…d4+!

The b3-pawn must be defended 2…Kg3? 3 K×b3=.

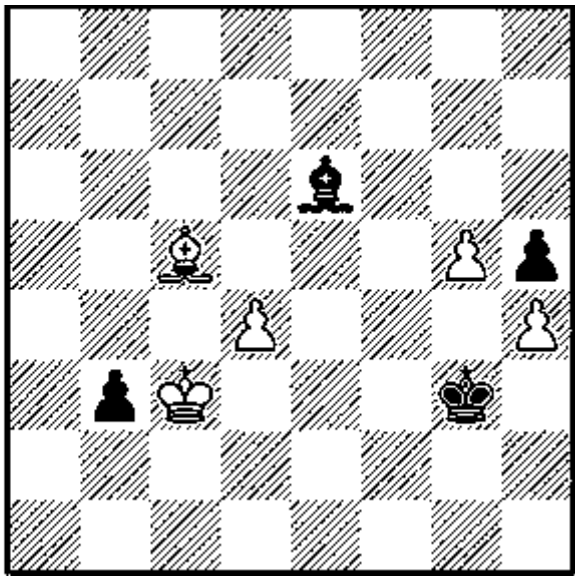
3 ed

An interesting sideline is 3 B×d4 Kg3 4 g6 K×h4 5 Kd2 Kh3! (5…Kg3 6 Be5+ Kg2 7 Bf6) 6

Bf6 (6 Ke2 Kg2! 7 Bf6 h4) 6…h4 (threatening 7…Kg3) 7 Ke2 Kg2–+ (“pants”).

3…Kg3

The careless 3…Kg4? would have led to a draw after 4 d5 B×d5 5 Bf2.



4 Ba3

Note the black bishop’s excellent position in the variation 4 Be7 K×h4 5 g6+ Kg4. It protects the b3-pawn and restrains both enemy pawns along the single diagonal a2-g8. White has no counterplay, so Black just advances his h-pawn and wins the bishop for it.

4…K×h4 5 Kd3 K×g5

Another strong line is 5…Kg3 6 Ke4 h4 7 d5 h3 8 de h2 9 Bd6+ Kg4 10 B×h2 b2 11 e7 b1Q+.

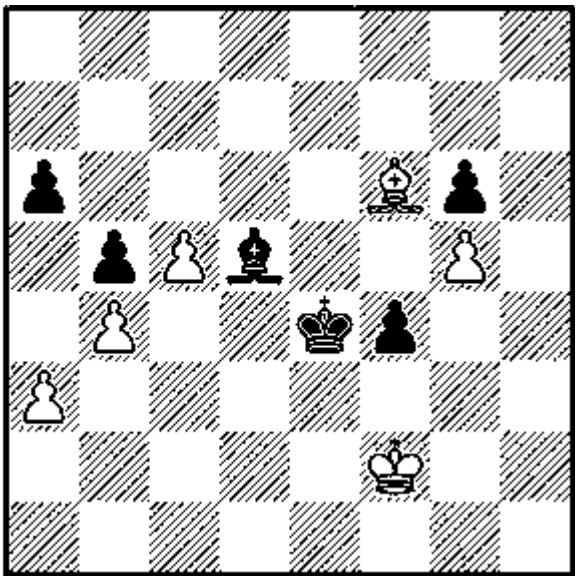
6 Ke4 h4 7 Kf3 (7 d5 B×d5+) **7…Bd5+**

White resigned. After 8 Kf2, Black’s king goes after the b3-pawn. The bishop, meanwhile, defends the h-pawn, while restraining the d-pawn along the diagonal c8-h3.

Tragicomedies

Bellón – Minic

Siegen ol 1970



This was the adjourned position, in which White sealed his 41st move. After analyzing in their rooms, the players agreed to a draw without resumption. Black’s positional advantage appeared insufficient for victory to Minic. Judging from his comments in the *Informant*, he was convinced by the following line: 1 Bd8 Bc6 2 Bc7 Kf5 3 Bd8 Kg4 4 Be7 a5 5 ba Kf5 6 a6 Ke4 7 a7 Kd4 8

a8Q B×a8 9 c6 B×c6 10 Bd6, when the a3-pawn is securely protected, and the draw is obvious.

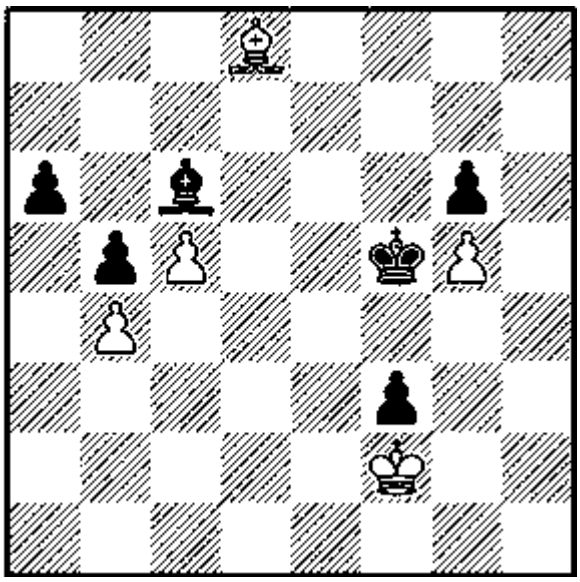
It is surprising that even after home analysis, neither the players themselves nor their teammates were able to solve this rather simple position. In point of fact, its evaluation hinges on the sealed move.

After 1 Bd8? Bc6!, Black wins. To begin with, he must simply capture the a3-pawn (since the bishop cannot protect it), and then the threat of the …a6-a5 breakthrough will become more serious. Taking the pawn at a5 would give Black his second passed pawn.

2 Bc7 f3 3 Bd8 Kd3 4 Bc7 Kc2 5 Bd8 Kb3 6 Ke3 K×a3 7 Ba5 Ka2!⊙ 8 Kd2 (8 Kd3 Kb3) 8…Kb2⊙ 9 Ke3 Kc3⊙. Having done its job, the king returns to the other side.

10 Kf2 Kd3 11 Bd8 Ke4 12 Bc7 Kf5 13 Bd8

5-31



B

13…Kf4!

Zugzwang! White's bishop is torn apart: on one diagonal, it protects the g5-pawn; on the other, it controls the a5-square. On 14 Bc7+ K×g5, Black moves his king to d3 and plays …g6-g5-g4-g3+, when B×g3 loses to …a6-a5, and K×g3 to …Ke2.

After 14 Be7 a5! 15 ba b4, the king goes to the queenside once again, to win the bishop for the b-pawn. White has no counterplay, since the black bishop does everything on the one diagonal a8-h1, defending the f3-pawn and stopping both enemy passers.

The king retreat is no help either. 14 Kf1 Ke3 15 Bc7 a5! 16 B×a5 (16 ba b4) 16…Bd5, followed by 17…Bc4+ and 18…f2+.

After giving some thought to the final position of this variation, we come to understand that White's own pawn at c5 is in his way, because it blocks the important a7-g1 diagonal. So White must rid himself of it.

1 c6!!

The only saving line. In fact, Bellon probably sealed the other move instead. Otherwise, after the game ended, this line would have been revealed in the annotations.

1…B×c6 2 Bd8 Kd3 3 Bc7!

"Pawn in the crosshairs" – it is important to force it to move onto the same color square as its bishop.

3…f3 4 Bd8 Kc2 5 Bc7 Kb3 6 Bd8 K×a3 7 Ba5 Kb3 8 Ke3 Kc4 9 Kf2 Kd3 10 Bc7 Ke4 11 Bb6 Bd5 12 Bc7 Kf5 13 Bd8

This is the same position as in the last diagram – except that there is no pawn at c5. Here Black gets nothing from 13…a5 14 B×a5 K×g5, since the connected passed pawns are easily blockaded on the dark squares. If White had not forced the timely advance of the f-pawn, with the pawn at f4 this position would be lost, of course.

13…Kf4 14 Kf1!

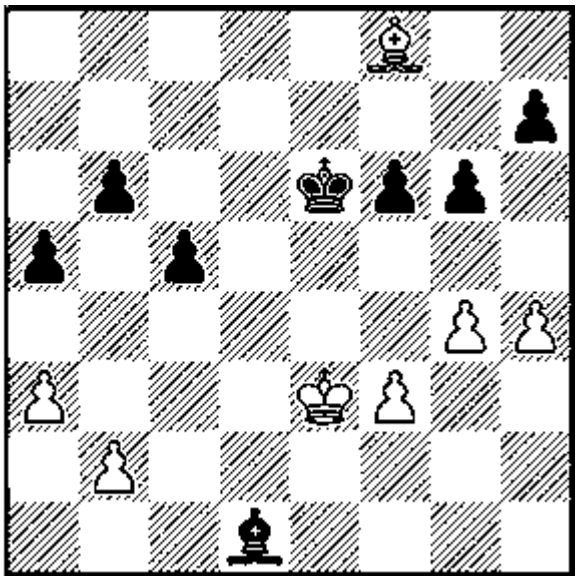
Now on 14…Ke3, White has 15 Bb6+ – this check was the reason behind the pawn sacrifice.

14…Bc4+ 15 Kf2

On 15…Bd3, White cannot play either 16 Ke1? Kg3! 17 Bc7+ Kg2 or 16 Kg1? Ke3! 17 Bb6+ Ke2, followed by 18…a5. However, he does have 16 Bc7+, exploiting the fact that the f3-pawn is not protected by the bishop (16…K×g5 17 K×f3). On 15…Be2, there follows 16 Kg1! Ke3 17 Bb6+ (the e2-square is occupied). And if the bishop goes to g2, White plays Ke1! (analysis by Dvoretsky).

Ljubojevic – Karpov
Milan 1975

5-32



W

Of course, the position is drawn. All White needs do is to take the kingside pawns off the light squares, and his bishop can defend them. This frees the king to counter Black's play on the queenside, where he wants to create a passed pawn.

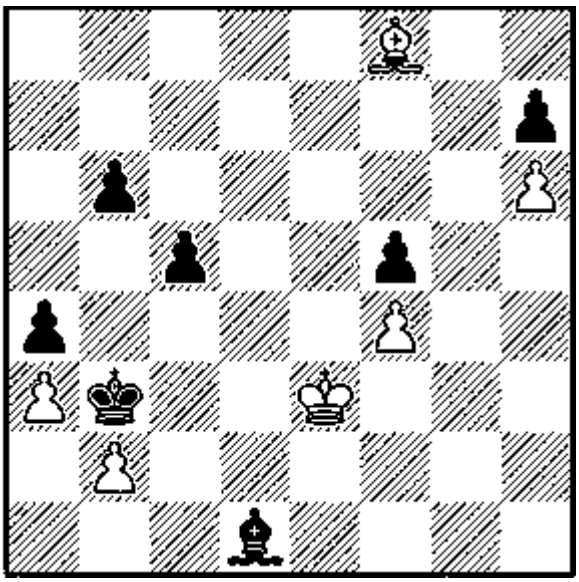
The simplest solution to the problem is 1 g5! f5 (1…fg 2 hg △ f4=) 2 f4 Kd5 3 Bg7. Another reasonable line would be 1 h5!? g5 (1…gh 2 gh Kd5 3 Bg7 f5 4 h6 Kc4 5 f4 Kb3 6 Kd2= Matanovic) 2 Ke4 Bc2+ 3 Ke3 f5 4 gf+ K×f5 5 h6=.

1 Ke4?! a4 2 h5?

White is doing all he possibly can to complicate his life. Here again, 2 g5! f5+ 3 Ke3 would have secured an elementary draw.

2…gh 3 gh f5+ 4 Ke3 Kd5 5 h6 Kc4 6 f4 Kb3

5-33



W?

White might still have saved the game by playing 7 Kd2! Bf3 8 Kc1 (or 8 Bg7). Evidently, Ljubojevic did not feel like calculating the consequences of 7…K×b2. However, as Villeneuve has established, the bishop sacrifice is insufficient: 8 K×d1 c4 (8…K×a3 9 Kc2 Kb4 10 Kb2=) 9 Bg7+

c3 10 Ke2! (10 Be5? b5 11 Bd4 b4–+) 10…K×a3 (10…Kc2 11 Ke3 b5 12 Kd4! Kd2 13 Kc5!) 11 B×c3 (11 Kd3 b5 12 Kc2!) 11…b5 12 Be5 b4 (△ 13…Ka2–+) 13 Bd6!=.

7 Bg7? Kc2!

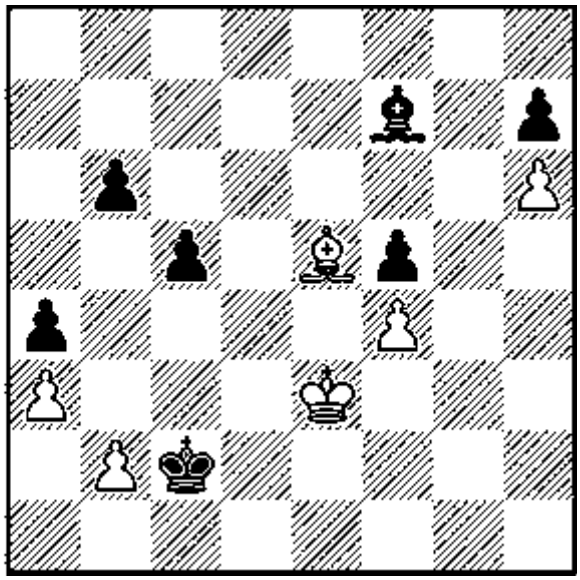
Only now, when the white king is cut off from the queenside, does his position become lost. Black's pawn advance will reach its goal – but only with the black bishop on b3, which is where Karpov is sending it now.

8 Be5 Bh5 9 Bf6

9 Bc7 would not help: 9…K×b2 10 B×b6 c4 11 Bd4+ (11 Bc5 c3 12 Bd4 Kc2 13 Bf6 Be8 followed by 14…Bb5 and 15…Kb3) 11…K×a3 12 Kd2 Kb3 13 Bf6 a3. Then Black will place his bishop at b1, pawn at a2, transfer his king to g6 and (with the white bishop at g7), trade the c4 and h6 pawns by means of …c4-c3.

9…Bf7 10 Be5

5-34



B?

10…Bb3! 11 Bg7 b5 12 Bf8

Nothing would be changed with 12 Bc3 b4!13 Bg7 (13 ab a3!; 13 Be1 K×b2 14 ab cb 15 B×b4 a3 16 Kd4 a2 17 Bc3+ Kc2 18 Ba1 Kb1 19 Bc3 Bf7! 20 Ke5 Bg6–+) 13…c4.

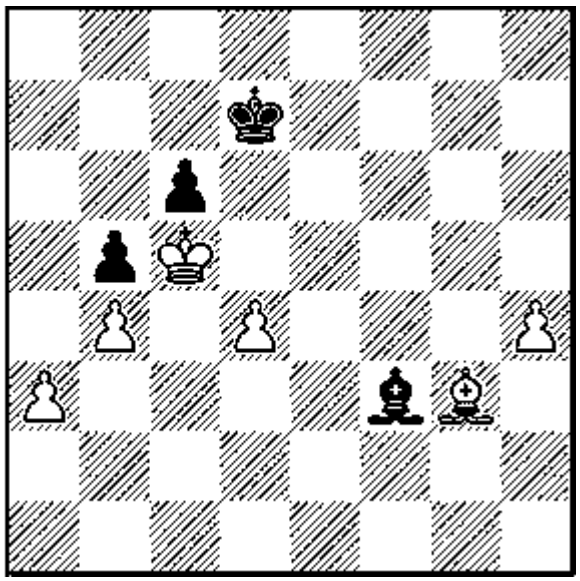
12…c4 13 Bg7 b4! 14 Kd4

The main line of Karpov's idea runs 14 ab c3 15 B×c3 (15 bc Bc4!) 15…a3 16 Be5 a2–+. Without the bishop at b3 in the final position, White could save himself with 17 b3.

14…c3 15 bc ba 16 N4 a2 17 Kc5 Kb1 18 Kb4 a1Q 19 B×a1 K×a1 20 c5 Kb2 21 c6 a3 22 c7 Be6 23 Kc5 a2 24 Kd6 Bc8 White resigned.

Exercises

5-35



5/5
B?

The Bishop Restrains the Passed Pawn

Situations in which the bishop stops a passed pawn (and sometimes two – on the same diagonal) we call the ***second defensive system.*** The weaker side's king in these cases "maintains the zone" – that is, it defends its pawns, and limits the activity of the opposing king.

Attempts to break down the second defensive system invariably involve breaking through to the passed pawn with the king (often after a preliminary diversionary attack, and "widening the beachhead" on the other wing).

Euwe – Yanofsky
Groningen 1946

5-36

1…h5!

A typical move, ensuring the safety of the kingside pawns. On 1…Ke6?!, Black would have had to reckon not only with 2 g4!?, but also with 2 Kf2 Kd7? 3 Bf8 g6 4 Bh6!, when the h7-pawn becomes an attractive target for the white king.

2 Kf2 Bd3?

A technique we have already seen more than once: the a-pawn is forced onto a square of the same color as its bishop. However, now was not the time to attack the pawn. Necessary was 2…Ke6, bringing the king closer to the important f5-square.

3 a7 Be4

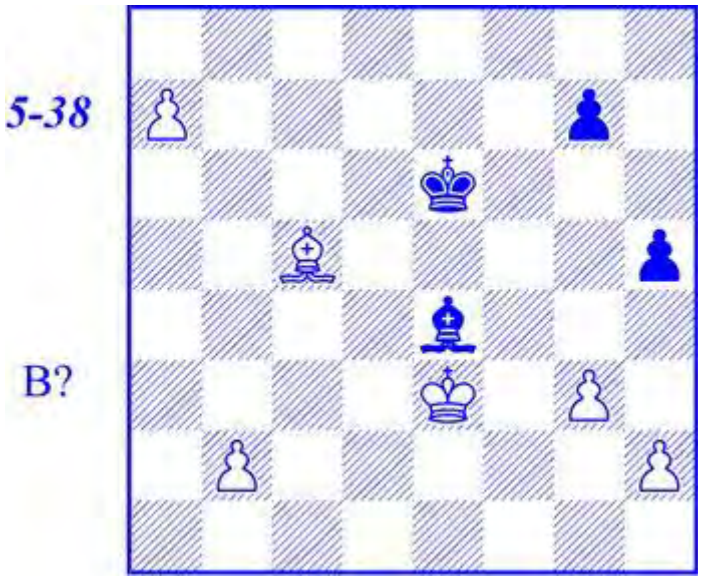
5-37

4 g3?

His opponent's inaccuracy remains unpunished. As John Nunn has correctly noted, 4 g4!! hg 5 Kg3 won. For example, 5…Bf3 (with the king on e6, Kf5 holds) 6 Kf4 Ke6 7 Bd4 g6 8 h3⊙ Bg2 (8…g5+ 9 Kg3+–) 9 K×g4!+– (but not 9 hg Bh1=) with a situation as soon arose in the game.

Also sufficient for victory is 4 h4! g6 5 g4! hg 6 Kg3 Bf3 7 Kf4 Ke6 8 Kg5 Be4 9 K×g4 Kd7 (the attempt to transfer the king to b7 is hopelessly late) 10 Kf4 Bg2 11 Kg5 Be4 12 a8Q B×a8 13 K×g6+– (shown by Burkhard Treiber).

4…Ke6 5 Ke3



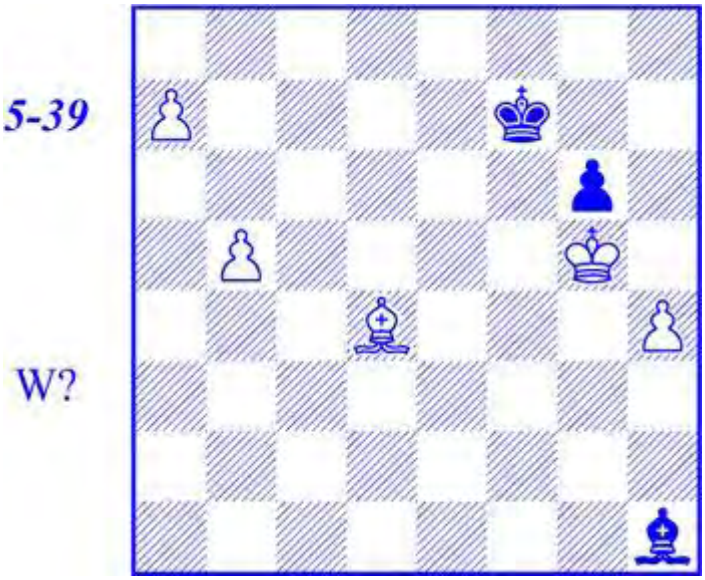
5…Bg2?

An instructive error: the white king should not have been allowed near the pawns. The draw becomes unavoidable after 5…Kf5! 6 Bf8 g6 7 Kd4 Bg2 8 Kc5 Ke6! 9 Kb6 Kd7 10 b4 Ba8 11 b5 Kc8!= (but not 11…Bg2? in view of 12 a8Q! B×a8 13 Ka7 Bf3 14 Kb8+–, with the unstoppable threat of b5-b6-b7).

6 Kf4! g6 7 g4!

The first step is to widen the kingside beachhead.

7…hg 8 K×g4 Bh1 9 Kg5 Kf7 10 Bd4 Bg2 11 h4 Bh1 12 b4 Bg2 13 b5 Bh1



14 Bf6! Bg2

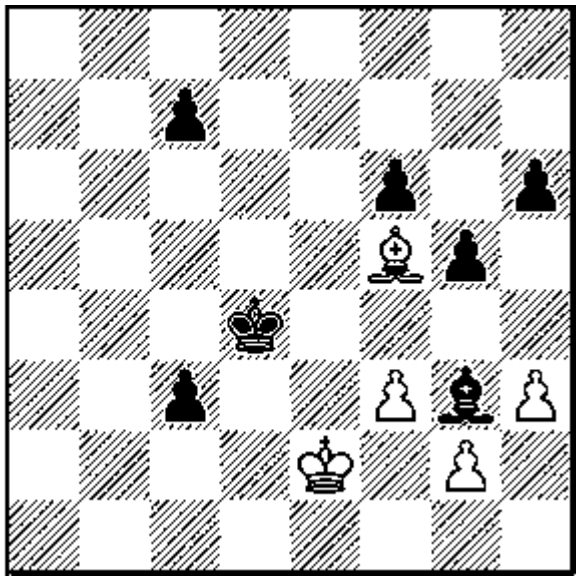
On 14…Be4, both 15 Kf4 △ Ke5 and 15 b6⊙ are strong.

15 h5! (the second, decisive step!) **15…gh 16 Kf5** Black resigned.

If 16…Ke8, then 17 Ke6 △ Kd6-c7. White's bishop restrains the h-pawn and simultaneously deprives the enemy king of the squares e7 and d8 on the single diagonal d8-h4.

Makarychev – Averbakh
Lvov 1973

5-40



B?

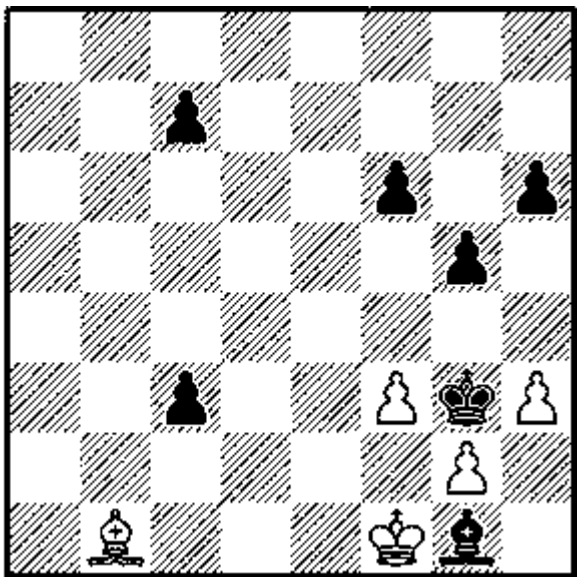
Black's plan is the same as in the preceding example: first, the king invades the kingside; then, the beachhead is widened; and finally, the king breaks through to the c-pawn.

1…Ke5 2 Bc2 Kf4 3 Bb1 Bh2 4 Kf2 Bg1+! 5 Ke2

5 K×g1 Ke3 6 Kf1 Kd2 would lose immediately.

5…Kg3 6 Kf1

5-41



B?

6…Bf2!

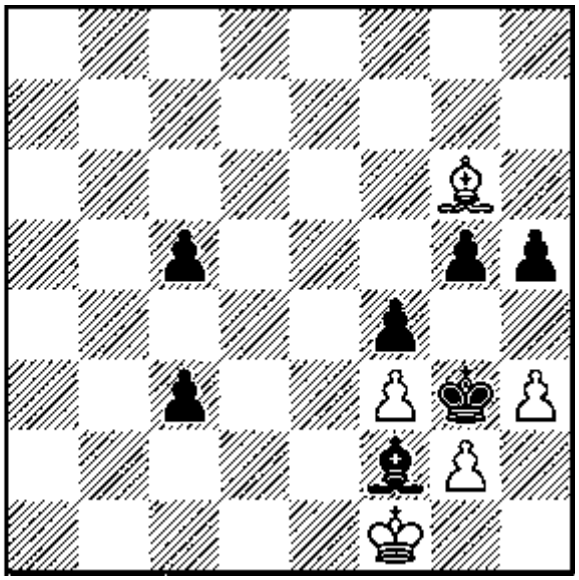
In order to prepare …f7-f5, Black must first take control of the e1-square.

7 Bc2 f5! 8 Bb1

On 8 B×f5, the king gets through to his passed pawn: 8…Kf4 9 Bc2 Ke3–+ (it is important that White cannot reply 10 Ke1).

8…f4 9 Bg6 Be3 10 Bc2 h5 11 Bf5 c5 12 Bg6

5-42



B?

12…h4!

Black only gets a draw out of 12…g4? 13 hg hg (13…h4 14 Be4) 14 fg, for example: 14…K×g4 15 Ke2 Kg3 16 Kf1 (but not 16 Be4? c2 17 B×c2 K×g2) 16…Bf2 17 Be4! c4 18 Ke2! c2 19 Kd2=.

13 Bf5 (13 Be4 c4⊙) **13…g4! 14 hg**

No better is 14 fg f3 15 gf K×h3–+.

14…h3 15 gh K×f3 16 g5 Kg3 17 g6 Bd4 18 h4 f3 19 h5 Bg7 20 Ke1 f2+

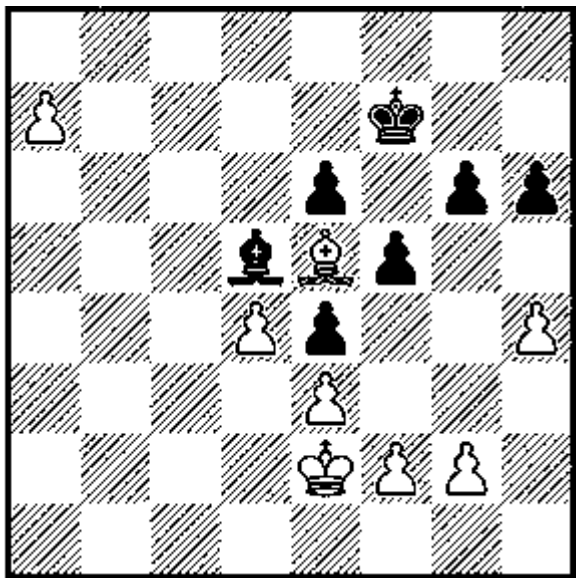
White resigned. After 21 Kf1 Kf3, the king marches unhindered to d2.

And now, let's examine a much more complex ending, excellently played and annotated by Kaidanov.

Kaidanov – Antoshin

RSFSR ch 1984

5-43



W?

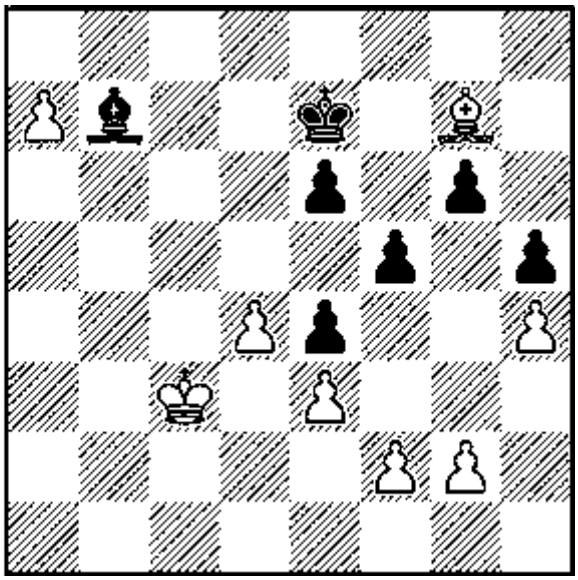
What plan should White select? 1 Bf4? (hoping to induce the reply 1…h5, giving his king invasion squares on the kingside) would be a gross blunder, in view of the pawn sacrifice 1…g5! 2 hg hg 3 B×g5 Ke8. Black's king arrives at b7 (the "first defensive system"), and White is unable to create a second passed pawn on the kingside.

By the way, …g6-g5 is not yet a threat – White replies h4-h5, fixing the h6-pawn. (With a lightsquare bishop, for the weaker side to have his pawns on dark squares renders them weak, and is generally a serious positional defect.) But without exchanging off these pawns, it makes no sense to go into the first defensive position, because the bishop will be unable to defend its kingside.

White will not be able to get to the a-pawn through the queenside: the enemy king will

"maintain the zone." But by doing so, he will be diverted from the f7-square, and then White can play Bg7, induce …h6-h5, and return with his king to the kingside. Let's try it: 1 Kd2 Ba8 2 Kc3 Bb7 3 Kb4 Ke7 4 Bg7 h5 5 Kc3.

5-44



B?

Is there a way to prevent the king march via h2 to e5? Kaidanov suggests a counterattack by Black's king: 5…Kd6 6 Kd2 Kd5 7 Ke1 Kc4 8 Kf1 Kd3 9 Kg1 Ke2=. However, he must also consider 7 Ke2! (instead of 7 Ke1) 7…Kc4 8 f3.

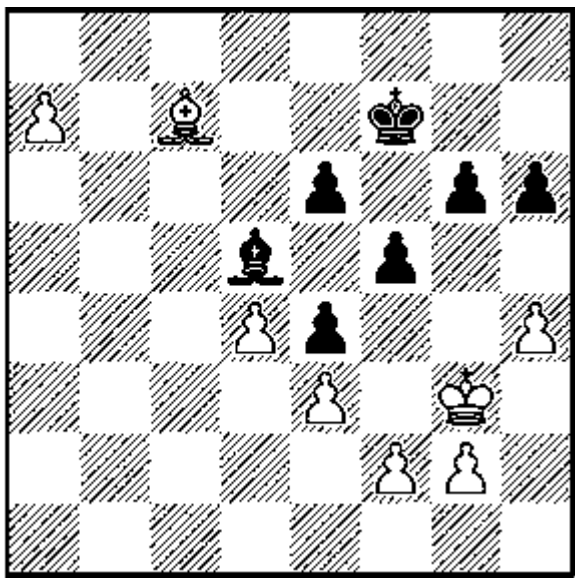
It would be safer to exploit the absence of White's king from the kingside by switching, at precisely this moment, to the first defensive position: 5…Kd7 6 Kd2 Bd5 7 Ke1 Kc8 8 Bf8 (8 Be5 Kb7 9 Bb8 changes nothing, while 8 Kf1 Kb7 loses the pawn at a7) 8…Kb7 9 Bc5 Bc4!, and if 10 f3, then 10…f4!!=.

1 Kf1! Ba8 2 Kg1 Bd5 3 Kh2 Ba8 4 Kg3!

Now let's examine 4 Kh3 Bd5 5 g4? fg+ 6 K×g4 Ba8 7 Kg3 Bd5 8 Kg2 Ba8 9 Kf1 Bd5 10 Ke2 Ba8 11 Kd2 Bd5 12 Kc3 Ba8 13 Kb4. Now, the defensive plan of marching the black king down to e2 (13…Ke7? 14 Bg7 h5 15 Kc3 Kd6 16 Kd2 Kd5) does not work, because his opponent will advance through the now open g2-square. But there is another idea: Black can return to the first defensive position: 13…Bd5! 14 Kc5 Ke7 15 Bg7 h5 15 Kb4 Kd6 17 Kc3 Kc7! 18 Be5+ Kb7 19 Bb8 Kb6! 20 Kd2 Kb7 21 Ke1 Bc4!=, and White's king will not get to the kingside.

4…Bd5 5 Bc7!

5-45



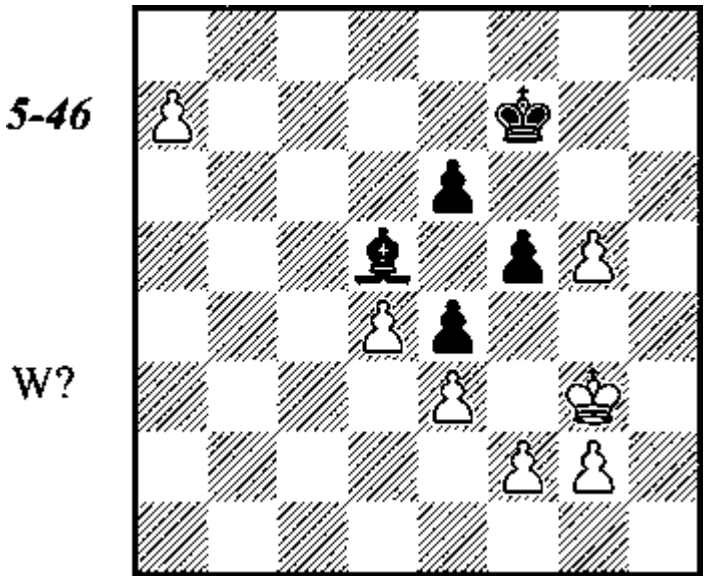
B

5…Ke7

Forced, because the temporizing 5…Ba8? allows White's king to get to its passed pawn: 6 Kf4! g5+ 7 Ke5! gh (7…Ke7 8 h5!+–) 8 Kd6+–. With the king already on e7, 6 Kf4? g5+!= no longer

works for White; on the other hand, the bishop sacrifice now becomes strong.

6 Bf4! g5! 7 B×g5+! hg 8 hg Kf7



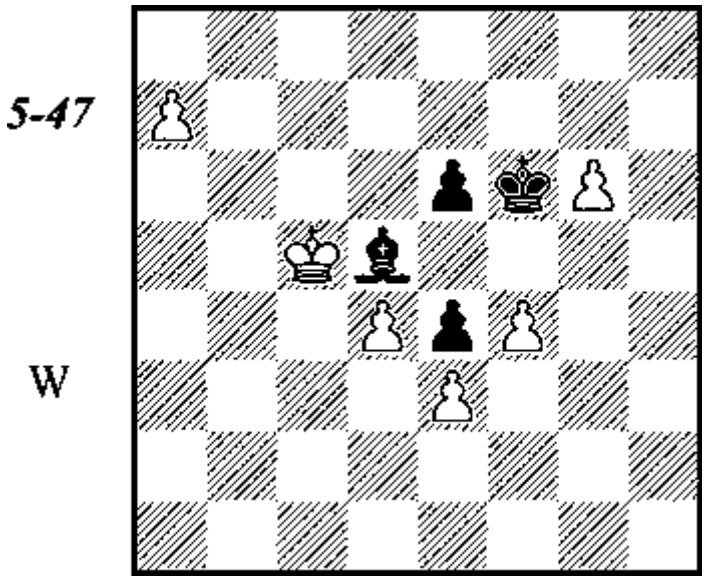
9 f4!

But not 9 Kf4? Kg6 10 f3 Kf7 (or 10…Kh5) 11 fe fe=.

9…Kg6 (9…ef 10 gf △ Kf4, e4+–) **10 Kh4 Ba8 11 g4! fg 12 K×g4 Bd5 13 Kg3**

Having strengthened his kingside position to the utmost, White brings the king over to the queenside. Black must send his king to meet it – but then the g-pawn charges ahead.

13…Kf7 14 Kf2 Ke7 15 Ke1 Kd6 16 Kd2 Bc6 (16…Kc7 17 g6 Kb7 18 g7 e5 19 de K×a7 20 f5+–) **17 Kc3 Ba8 18 Kb4 Bd5 19 g6 Ke7 20 Kc5 Kf6** (20…Ba8 21 f5 ef 22 d5+–)

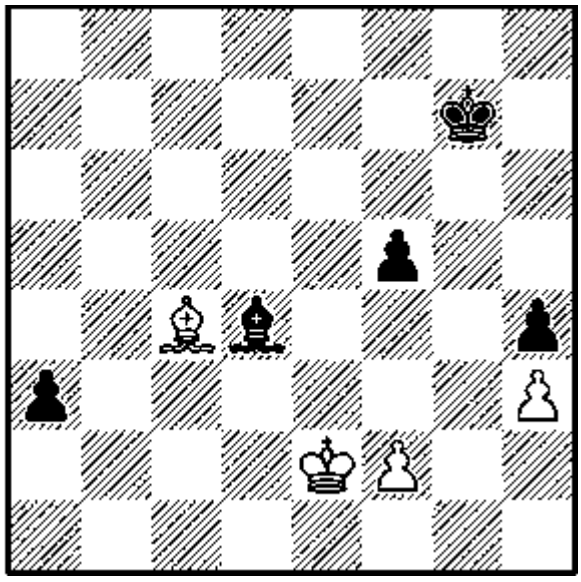


21 f5! Ba8 22 fe K×e6 23 d5+ Black resigned.

Exercises

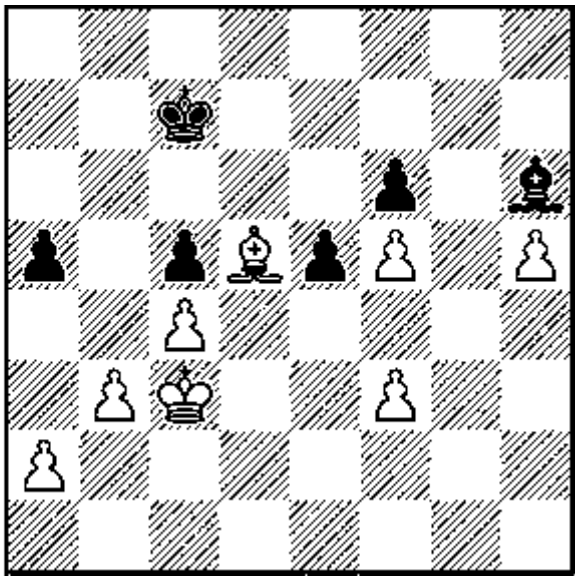
Both of the following exercises are rather difficult. In the first, you must calculate variations accurately; in the second, you must find a far from obvious plan of action.

5-48



5/6
W?

5-49



5/7
W?

Chapter 6

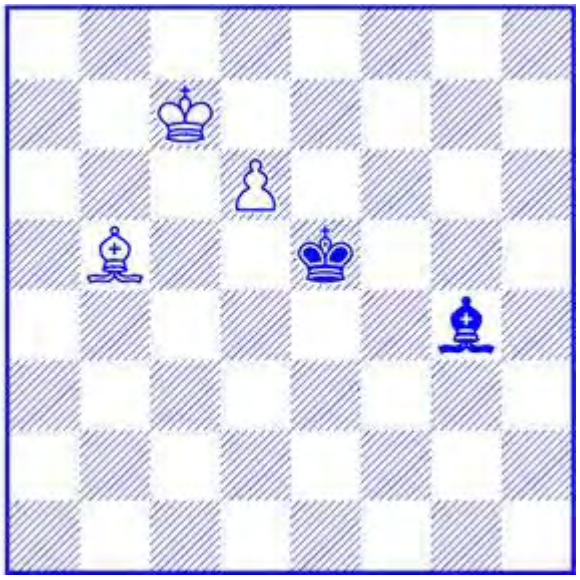
Bishops of the Same Color

Minimal Material

Bishop and Pawn vs. Bishop

These endgames were first subjected to thorough analysis in the mid-19th century by the Italian player Centurini. Later, significant additions to the theory were made by GM Averbakh.

6-1



White to move wins, by ***driving off*** the enemy bishop from one diagonal, and then ***interfering*** along the other diagonal.

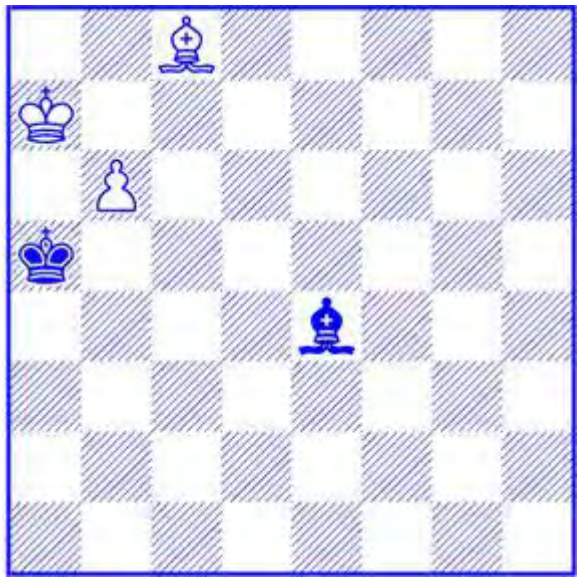
1 Bd7 Bd1 2 Bh3 Ba4 3 Bg2 △ 4 Bc6+–

Can this plan be prevented? Yes, it can – provided Black's king can get to c5, preventing White's bishop from interfering along the diagonal. Black to move draws:

1…Kd4! (but not 1…Kd5? 2 Bd7 Bd1 3 Bc6+ and 4 d7) **2 Bd7 Bd1 3 Bh3 Ba4 4 Bg2 Kc5!**= Thus, if the weaker side's king cannot get in front of the pawn, then the basic defensive principle becomes: ***king behind the king!***

The short diagonal: even with the "right" king position, the draw is impossible if one of the diagonals along which the bishop will restrain the pawn proves too short.

6-2



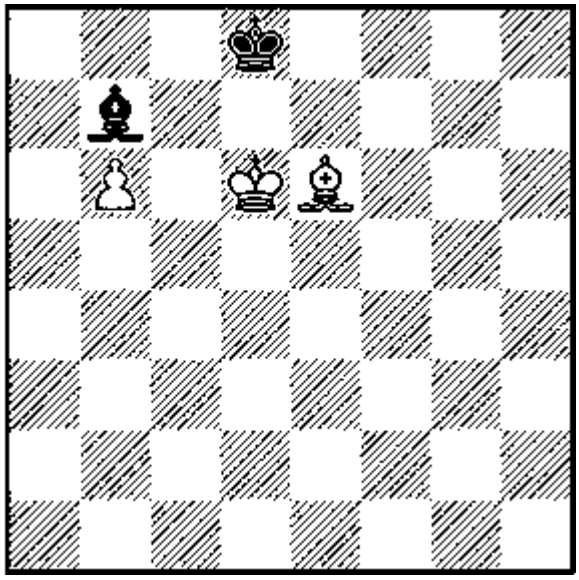
W

1 Bb7 Bf5 2 Bf3 Bc8 3 Be2⊙+–

All the squares on the c8-a6 diagonal, except c8, are under the control of White pieces – that is why we get zugzwang. Now, if we were to move the entire position down one rank, the bishop would get another free square, and White could no longer win.

The following position of reciprocal zugzwang has some practical significance.

6-3
$



White to move draws. 1 Bd5 Kc8 (or 1…Ba6) is useless. On **1 Bf5**, there follows **1…Bf3 2 Be6** (△ 3 Bd5+–) **2…Bb7! 3 Kc5 Bf3** (3…Ke7? 4 Bd5) **4 Bd5 Be2** (△ Kc8) **5 Bb7 Kd7**=

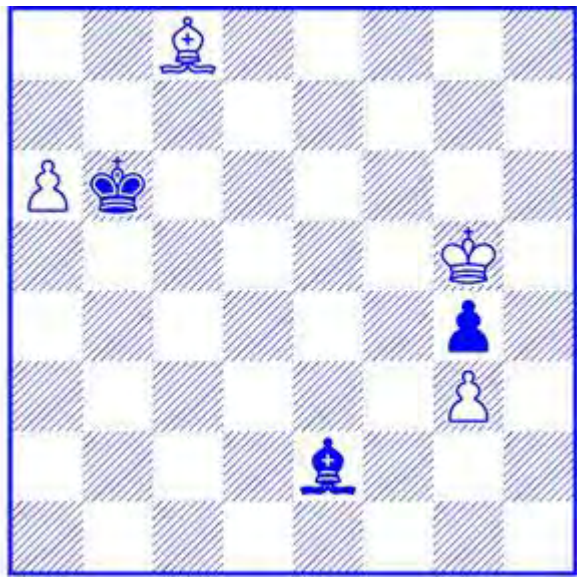
But what is Black to do if it is his move? Any bishop retreat along the h1-a8 diagonal is refuted by 2 Bd5; therefore, he must play **1…Ba6**. By the way (here's a tragicomedy!), in this won position, Botvinnik accepted a draw against Model in the 1931 Leningrad Championship.

The path to victory is uncomplicated: **2 Kc6! Bc8 3 Bc4!⊙ Bg4 4 Kb7! Bf3+ 5 Ka7** △ Ba6-b7+–.

Transposition to Positions with One Pawn

Charushin – Rosenholz
cr 1986

6-4
W?



A typical situation: White can take the g4-pawn only at the cost of his a6-pawn. The question is whether the enemy king can get back in time.

1 Kf4!⊙

Excellently played! White improves his own king's position (now it no longer stands in the path

of its pawn) while simultaneously using zugzwang to force the enemy king further away from the kingside. The hasty 1 B×g4? B×a6 2 Kf4 Kc7 3 Bf3 Kd6 4 g4 Ke7 leads only to a draw.

1…Ka7□ (1…Kc7 2 a7 Bf3 3 B×g4) **2 B×g4 B×a6 3 Bf3 Kb6**

No better is 3…Bc8 4 Be4 Kb6 5 Bf5.

4 g4 Kc5 5 g5 Kd6 6 g6 Ke6

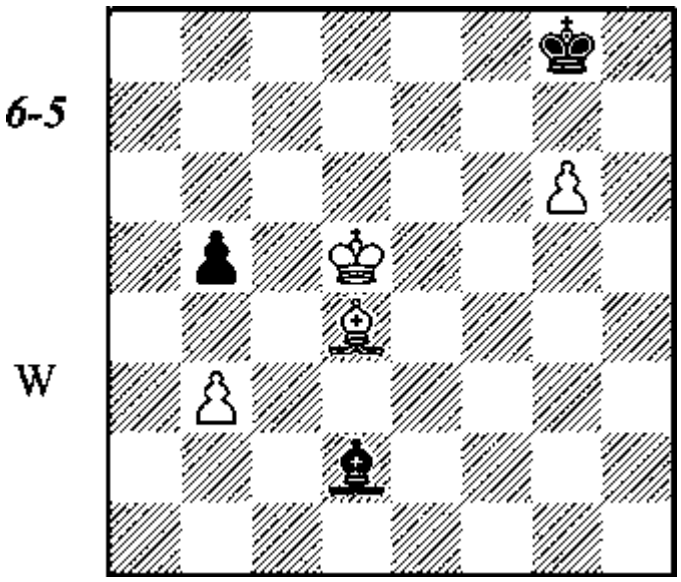
Nothing is altered by 6…Ke7 7 Kg5 Kf8 8 Kh6 Bc4 9 g7+ Kg8 10 Be4 △ 11 Bh7+.

7 Kg5 Bc4 8 g7

Black resigned, in view of 8…Kf7 9 Kh6 Kf6 10 Kh7 Kg5 11 Kh8 Kh6 12 Be4, followed by Bh7-g8 (the h7-g8 diagonal, where the black bishop must move, is too short).

Capablanca – Janowsky

New York 1916



White has nothing to play for, other than to pick up the b-pawn in exchange for his g6-pawn. Unfortunately, this plan would not be enough to win. I present the main variation: 1 Kc5 b4 2 Kc4 Be1 3 Bc5 Kg7 4 B×b4 Bg3! (Averbakh's analysis shows that 4…Bf2 also draws, but that 4…Bh4? loses) 5 Bc3+ K×g6 6 b4 Kf7 7 b5 Bc7! 8 Kd5 Ke7 9 Kc6 Kd8 10 Kb7 Kd7=.

1 Ke4

Capablanca is in no hurry to force matters – he maneuvers, hoping for a mistake by his opponent.

1…b4

By no means forced (1…Be1 2 Kd3 Bb4 3 Bc3 Be7 is not bad); but, on the other hand, it does not spoil anything.

2 Be3 Bc3 3 Kd3 Be1 4 Bd2 Bf2 5 Ke4 (5 B×b4 Kg7=) **5…Bc5?**

And here is the mistake! Now White captures the b4-pawn, with a tempo ahead of the other variations. First Black had to lure the king away from the queenside: 5…Kg7! 6 Kf5, and now he can defend the pawn (6…Bc5 7 Bf4 Bf2 8 Be5+ Kg8=).

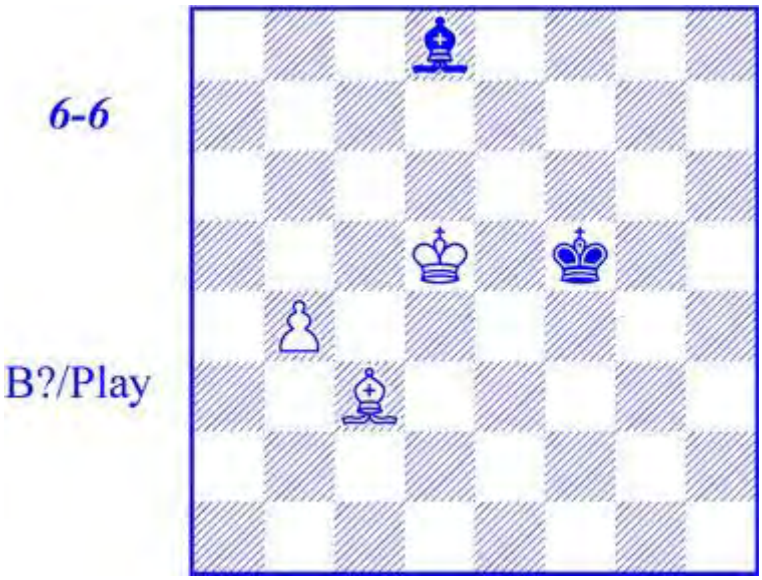
6 Kd5! Be7

Still worse is 6…Bf2 7 B×b4 Kg7 8 Bc3+ K×g6 9 b4 Kf7 10 Bd4 Bg3 11 b5 Bc7 12 Kc6 Ba5 13 Be5 △ Bc7+–.

7 Kc4 Kg7 8 B×b4 Bd8 9 Bc3+?

White errs in return – although it is not at all obvious. The win was 9 Bd2! – a variation we shall examine later.

9…K×g6 10 b4 Kf5 11 Kd5

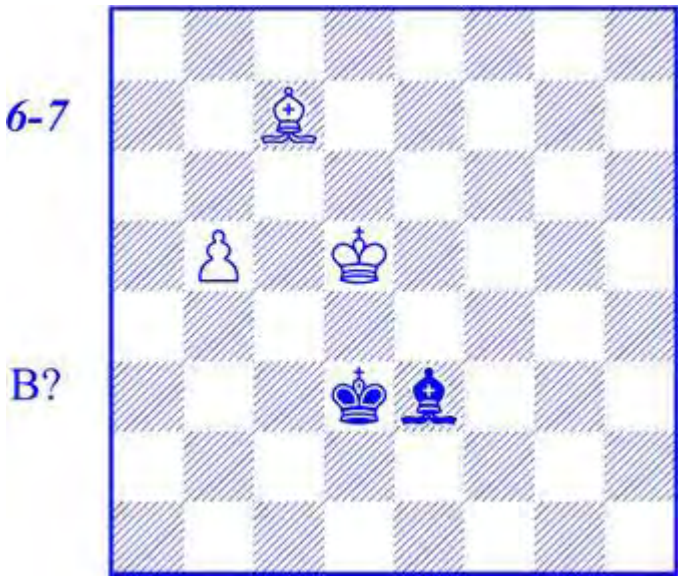


In this position, Janowsky resigned. And wrongly so – as Averbakh has shown. Black could get a draw by employing the basic defensive plan of "king behind king." Since White is going to put his king on c6, Black must hurry his king over to c4.

11…Kf4!! 12 Bd4 (12 Be5+ Ke3 13 b5 Kd3 14 Kc6 Kc4=) **12…Kf3! 13 b5** (13 Bc5 Ke2 14 Kc6 Kd3 15 Kd7 Bg5 16 b5 Kc4) **13…Ke2! 14 Kc6 Kd3 15 Bb6 Bg5 16 Bc7 Be3**

After 17 Bd6 Kc4, Black prevents the interference along the diagonal at c5 just in time. But the struggle is not over yet.

17 Kd5!



The most dangerous continuation, as pointed out by Issler. If Black now plays 17…Kc3?, then 18 Bd6 Bb6 (18…Kb3 19 Bc5 Ka4 20 Kc6) 19 Kc6. Black has no time to play Kc4 – White is ready to reply with either 20 Bc7 or Bc5, depending on where Black's bishop retreats.

Black is saved by a tactic, which is very useful to remember: it is a typical trick in bishop endgames.

17…Bd2!!

On 18 b6, the ***pin*** 18…Ba5 saves him.

18 Bd8 Be3!

Now the threat of 19 b6 Ba5 20 b7 forces Black to retreat. That is fine – White's bishop stands worse on d8 than it did on c7, and there is no longer any danger in 19 Be7 (△ 20 Bc5) 19…Bb6! 20 Kc6 Ba5! (White no longer has 21 Bc7) 21 Bd6 Kc4=.

White has just one final trap:

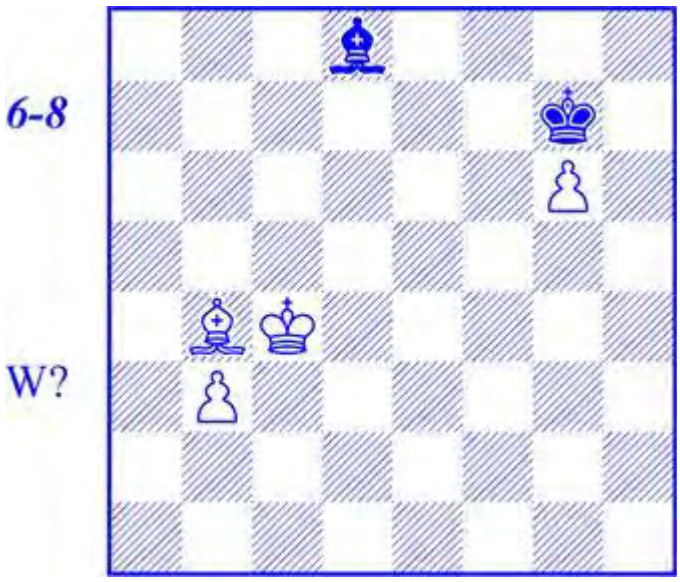
19 Bc7 Bd2! 20 Kc6 Be3! 21 Kb7! (21 Bd6 Kc4=) **21…Kc4 22 Ka6 Kb3!!**

Once again, the same technique of "king behind king": the black king heads for a4. He would

lose after 22…Bf2? 23 Bb6 Bh4 24 Be3 Bd8 25 Bd2 △ Ba5+–. And 22…Kb4? 23 Bb6 Bg5 24 Ba5+ and 25 b6+– is wrong too.

23 Bb6 Bg5 24 Bf2 Bd8 25 Be1 Ka4=

All that is left for us to see is what would have happened, had Capablanca played more precisely on his 9th move.



9 Bd2! K×g6 10 b4 Kf5 11 Kd5

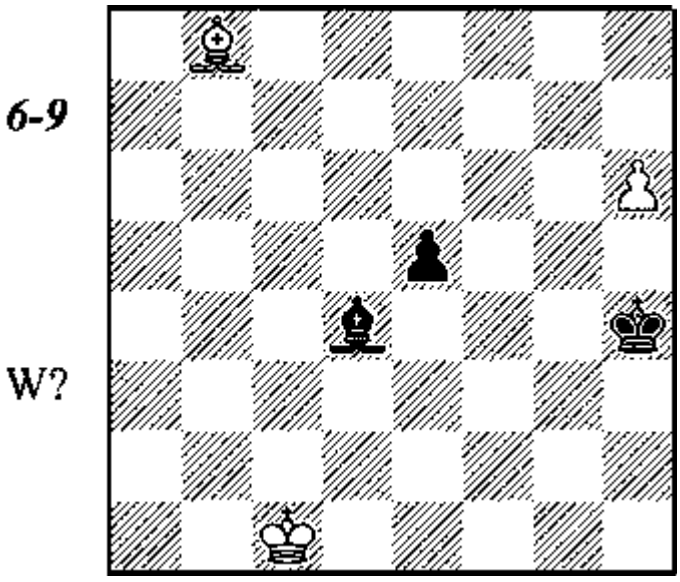
Now we are looking at the position from the next-to-last diagram, but with the bishop on d2 (instead of c3). Here Black's king is unable to get behind White's.

11…Kg4 12 b5 Kf3 13 Kc6 Ke4 14 Kb7!! Kd3 15 Be1! Kc4 16 Ka6 Kb3 17 Ba5 Bg5 18 b6+–.

Interference

We know that interference is the primary instrument by which the stronger side secures (or attempts to secure) the queening of its pawn. In all the examples we have looked at thus far, the bishop has done this work. But sometimes (although certainly not nearly as often), interference is carried out with the aid of the pawns. For instance, there is the following spectacular study.

P. Heuäcker, 1930



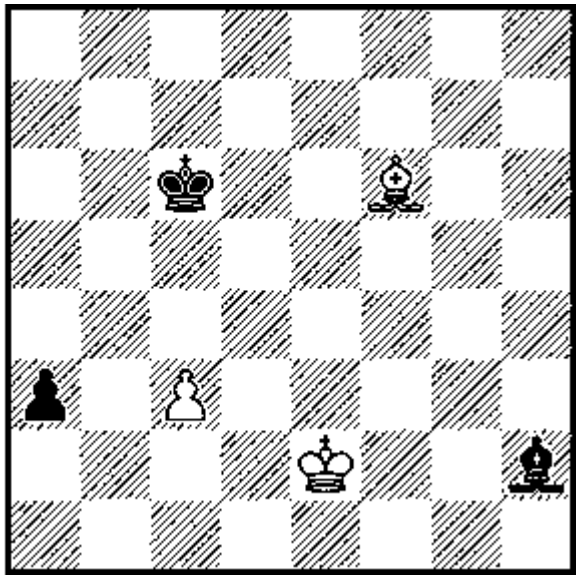
1 Ba7! (1 h7? e4=) **1…Ba1 2 Kb1 Bc3 3 Kc2 Ba1 4 Bd4!! B×d4** (4…ed 5 Kd3+–) **5 Kd3 Bb2 6 Ke4**+–.

Tragicomedies

We have already seen the tragicomedies that occurred in the games Botvinnik-Model and Capablanca-Janowsky. I will add one more example.

Savchenko – Krivonosov
USSR 1989

6-10



B

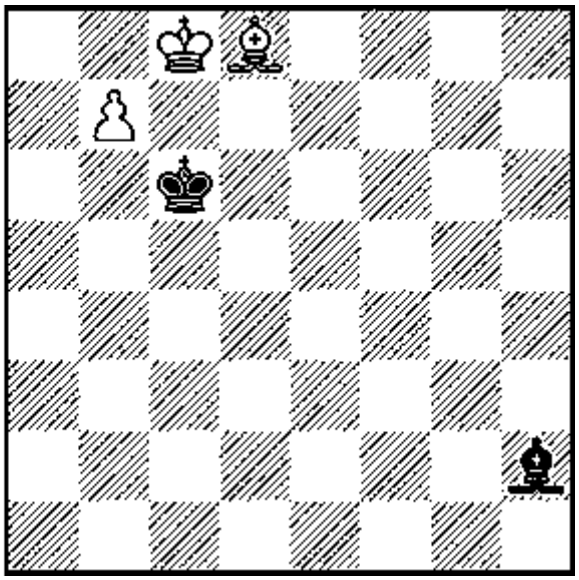
1…Be5?? 2 B×e5 Kd5 3 Bg7?? Kc4!, and Black won.

The same tactical idea of interference as in the Heuäcker study brought Black success here. However, this occurred only as a result of his opponent's gross blunder. After 3 Kd3! K×e5 (3…a2? 4 Bg7+–) 4 Kc2, the king is in the square of the a-pawn.

Black should have carried out his interference in a more primitive form, by preparing …Be5. This could have been achieved either by 1…Kd5 2 Kd3!? Ke6! (but not 2…a2? 3 c4+) 3 Bd4 a2 4 c4 Be5, or by 1…Kd6 2 c4 Be5 (2…a2; 2…Ke6) 3 c5+ Ke6!–+ (3…Kd5? is a mistake, because of 4 c6=).

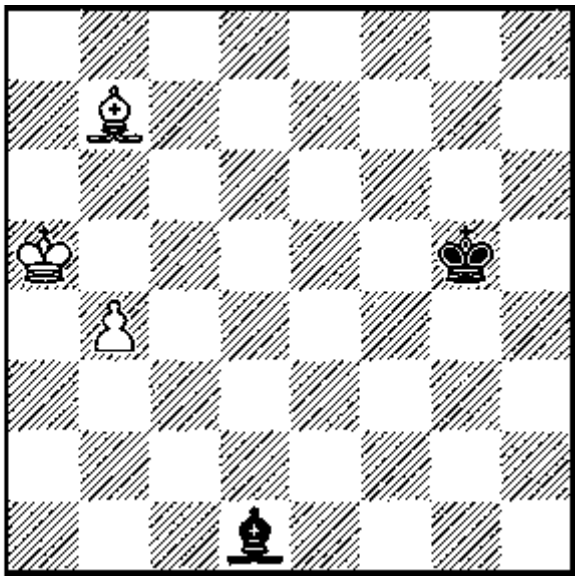
Exercises

6-11



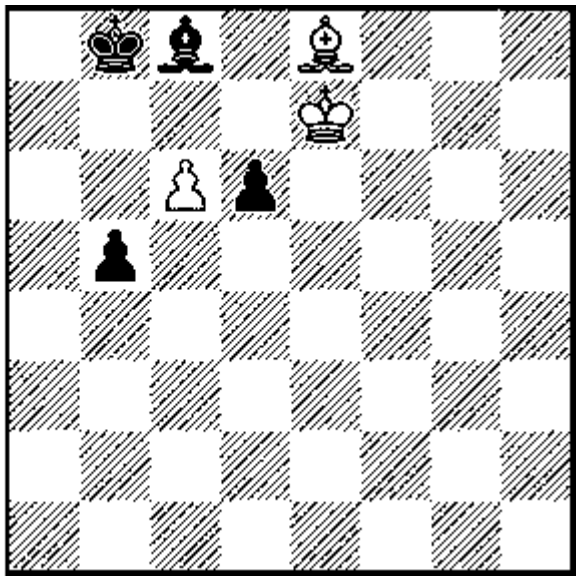
6/1
W?

6-12



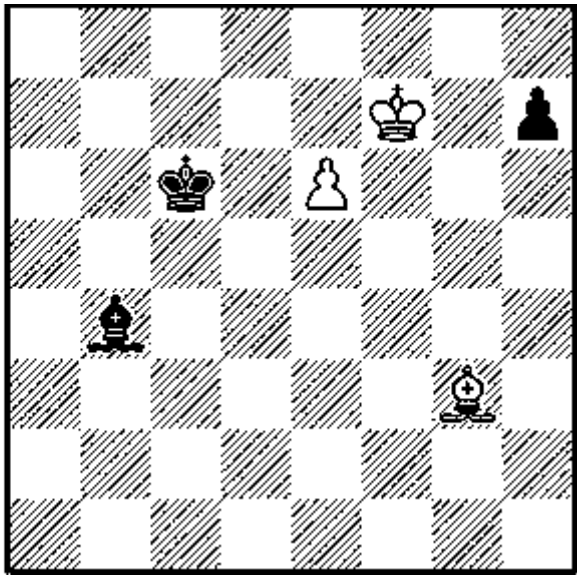
6/2
B?

6-13



6/3
W?/Play

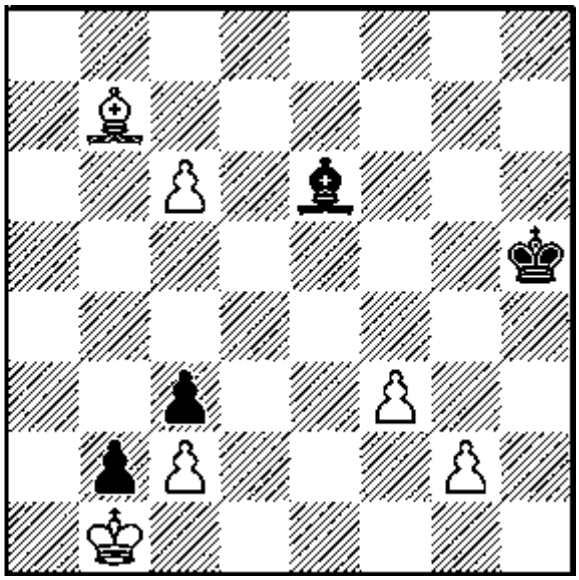
6-14



6/4
W?

6-15

6/5
W?/Play



The Bad Bishop

A vital principle of chess strategy (which is certainly to more than just the endgame) requires us ***not to place our pawns on the same color squares as our own bishop.***

In the first place, pawns that are fixed on the same color squares as the bishop limit its mobility – this is why such a bishop is called "bad."

In the second place, a bad bishop is unable to attack the enemy pawns (which are usually placed on the opposite color squares), which dooms it to passive defense of its own pawns.

And third, since both pawns and bishop control only one color of squares, there will be "holes" in between those squares that the enemy pieces will occupy.

Fixing Pawns

Averbakh – Veresov
Moscow 1947

6-16

W

1 h4!

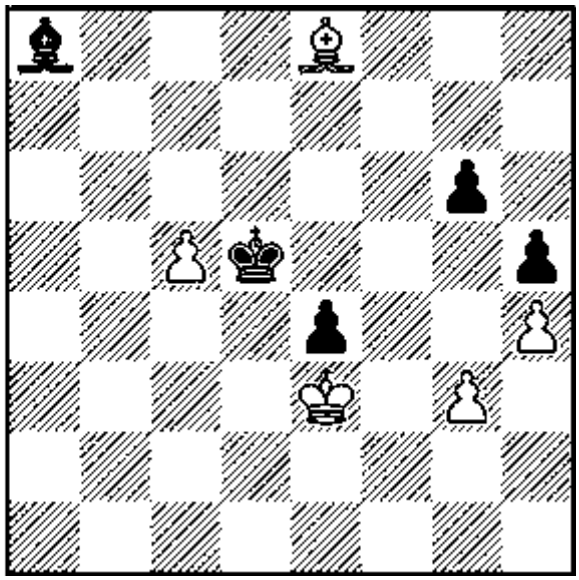
The experienced player makes such moves – fixing the enemy pawns on the same color squares as his bishop – without thinking.

White has a great positional advantage. After the necessary preparations, he will create an outside passed pawn on the queenside, which will divert the enemy forces, allowing White to fall upon the kingside pawns.

1…Bd7 2 Bf1 a5 3 Bg2 Bc6 (3…Bf5 4 Bh1⊙) **4 Bh3!**

The bishop aims for d7, where it will support the queenside pawn advance while at the same time be ready to attack the pawn at g6. For example: 4…Ba8 5 Bd7 Bb7 6 b4 ab 7 ab Ba8 8 c5 bc 9 bc Kd5 10 Be8

6-17



B

10…g5! (10…K×c5 11 B×g6 Kd6 12 B×h5 Ke5 13 Bg6 Bc6 14 g4+–) 11 hg K×c5 12 Bg6! Bd5 13 B×e4 Bg8 14 Kf4 Kd6 15 Kf5 Ke7 16 Kg6+–.

4…b5 6 cb B×b5 6 Bc8 Bc6 7 b4 ab 8 ab Bb5 9 Bb7 g5!

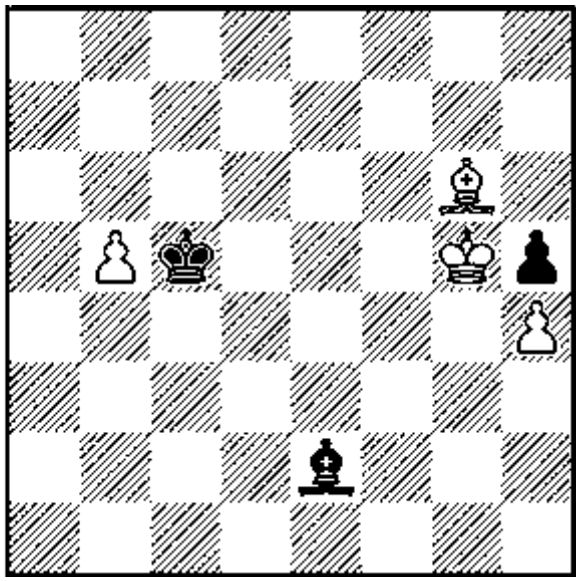
On 9…Bd3, 10 Bc6 Kf5 11 b5 (11 Bd7+) 11…Kg4 (11…B×b5 12 B×b5 Kg4 13 Kf2 e3+ 14 Kg2+–) 12 b6 Ba6 13 Kf2 e3+ 14 Kg2 is decisive.

10 B×e4 gh 11 gh Ba4

11…Be8 loses also: 12 Bf3 Kf5 13 Be2! (but not 13 Kd4? Kf4 and 14…Kg3) 13…Ke5 14 Bd3! ⊙ Bd7 (14…Kd5 15 Kf4 Kd4 16 Be2+–) 15 Bg6 Kd5 16 B×h5 Kc4 17 Be2+ K×b4 18 h5 Bf5 19 Bd3 Be6 20 h6 Bg8 21 Kd4.

12 Bg6 Bd1 13 b5 Kd5 14 Kf4 Kc5 15 Kg5 Be2! (15…K×b5 16 B×h5 Bc2 17 Be8+ Kc5 18 h5 Kd6 19 Kf6!+–)

6-18



W?

16 Be8! ⊙

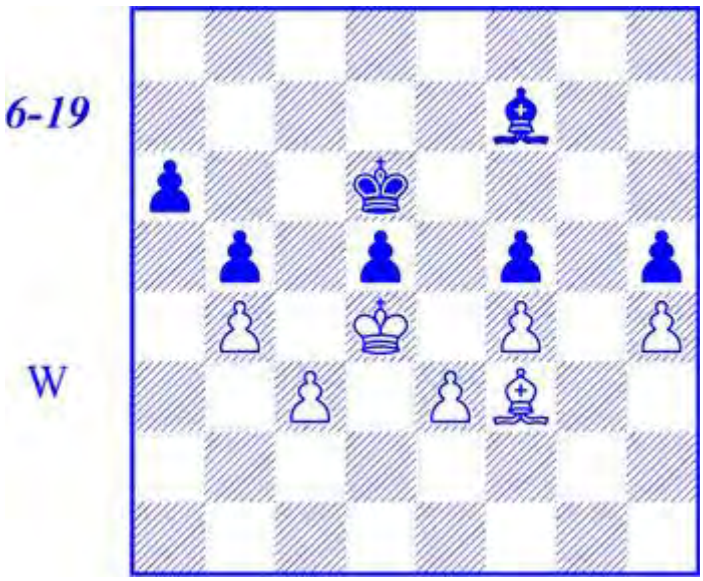
We know this technique from the ending Charushin-Rosenholz (Diagram 6-4). Before taking the pawn, it is important to drive the black king back to b6 – as far as possible from the kingside. The hasty 16 B×h5? B×b5 17 Bg4 Be8 18 Bf5 Kd6 19 Bg6 Ke7! leads only to a draw.

16…Kb6 17 B×h5 B×b5 18 Bg4 Be8 19 Bf5 Kc7 20 Bg6 Kd8 21 Kf6! Black resigned (analysis by Averbakh).

Zugzwang

With a bad bishop, the weaker side's defensive hopes often are destroyed through zugzwang. Here is the simplest example:

Y. Averbakh, 1954



The correspondence between the f3- and f7- squares is obvious – to win, it is necessary only to give Black the move. If you like, you can also find other pairs of corresponding squares (for example, the f1- and b3-squares also correspond to f7), but there is no real need.

1 Be2 Be8

If 1…Bg6, then 2 Bd3 Bh7 3 Bf1! Bg6 (3…Bg8 4 Be2 Bf7 5 Bf3⊙) 4 Bg2 Bf7 5 Bf3⊙.

2 Bd3 Bg6

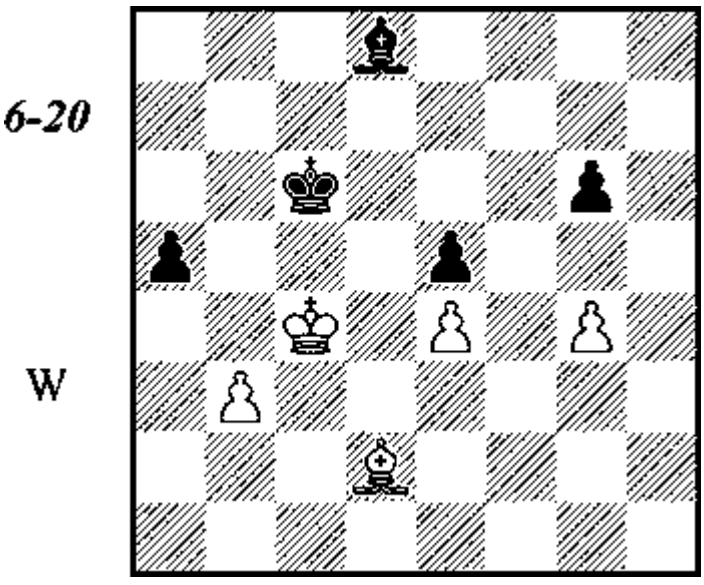
2…Bd7 3 Bc2 Be6 4 Bd1 Bf7 5 Bf3⊙.

3 Bc2 Bh7 4 Bb3! Bg8 5 Bd1 Bf7 5 Bf3+–.

Now, let's look at a considerably more complex endgame.

Shabalov – Varavin

Moscow 1986



1 Be1 Bb6

On 1…Bc7? 2 Bc3, Black is in zugzwang, and must put another pawn on the same color as his bishop, making his opponent's winning task that much simpler. For example, 2…g5 3 Bb2 Bd6 4 Bc1 Be7 5 Be3 Bf6 (5…Bd8 6 Bd2⊙) 6 Bc5 Bd8 7 Ba3 Bb6 (7…Bf6 8 Bb2 △ Bc3) 8 Bb2 Bc7 9

Bc3⊙. White's bishop maneuvers here in roughly the same way as he did in the preceding example.

2 Bh4! Be3

The c7-square turns out to correspond, not just to the c3-square, but also to g3. 2…Bc7? would be bad: 3 Bg3! Bb8 4 Be1 Bc7 5 Bc3. And on 2…Bd4 3 Bd8 decides.

3 Bg3 Bd4

After 3…Bf4 4 Be1, Black must defend the a5-pawn with his king, and allow the enemy king to enter. This does not bode well for Black: 4…Kb6 5 Kd5 Kb5 6 Bc3 g5 7 B×e5 B×e5 8 K×e5 Kb4 9 Kd5 K×b3 10 e5 a4 11 e6 a3 12 e7 a2 13 e8Q a1Q 14 Qe3+ Kc2 15 Qe2+, forcing the exchange of queens.

4 Bh2!⊙ Bb2

4…Ba1 is even worse: 5 Bg1 Bb2 6 Bf2 △ Be1+–.

5 Bg1 Ba3

On 5…Bc1, there follows 6 Bf2 Bg5 (6…Bd2 7 Bg3) 7 Bg3, and Black's bishop is forced onto the f6-h8 diagonal – a fate which also befalls him in the game continuation.

6 Bf2 Be7

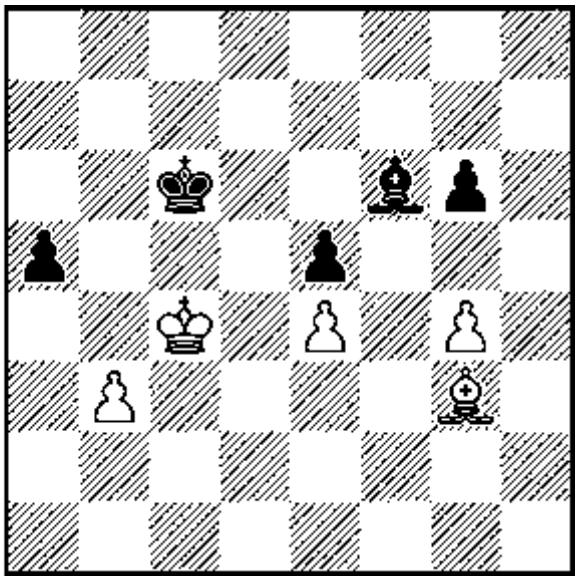
Otherwise, we get the basic zugzwang position: 6…Bd6 7 Be1 Bc7 8 Bc3⊙, or 6…Bb4 7 Bg3 Bd6 8 Be1, etc.

7 Bg3! Bf6

By means of a series of accurate maneuvers, Shabalov has achieved his aim – the bishop has been deflected onto a poor diagonal. On the other hand, there was no longer any choice: 7…Bd6 8 Be1 Bc7 9 Bc3⊙+–.

6–21

W?



8 Bh2⊙ Bg7 9 g5!

White "breaks the rule," by moving a pawn onto a square the same color as his own bishop – in order to restrict the enemy bishop's mobility still further. There is no other way to make any progress.

9…Bf8

9…Bh8 10 Bg3 Bg7 11 Be1 is hopeless.

10 B×e5 Be7 11 Bf6 Bb4?

The decisive error. After the accurate 11…Bc5 12 Bc3 (12 Bd8 Bb4 13 Kd4 Kd6) 12…Bb6 (shown by Aczel) realizing the extra pawn is evidently not possible.

12 Bc3!

Advancing the e-pawn does nothing for White: 12 e5 Bd2 13 e6 Kd6 14 e7 Kd7. So he takes the a5-pawn in exchange for the g5-pawn.

12…Be7 13 B×a5 B×g5 14 b4 Bf4 15 b5+ Kd6 16 Bc3! g5 17 e5+ Kc7

17…B×e5 18 B×e5+ K×e5 19 b6! (but not 19 Kc5? Ke6) 19…Kd6 20 Kb5 g4 21 Ka6+–.

18 Ba5+ Kc8 19 Kd5 g4 20 e6 g3 21 Kc6! Bg5 (22 e7 was threatened) **22 b6** Black resigned.

Pawns Which Do Not "Play by the Rules"

In chess, there are no absolute laws. Even so important and generally useful an axiom as the unprofitability of placing one's pawns on the same color squares as one's bishop must occasionally be broken. Here are the possible reasons for doing so:

– To restrict the mobility of the enemy bishop using one's own pawns (as occurred in the preceding example); – The need to undermine the enemy pawn chain; and

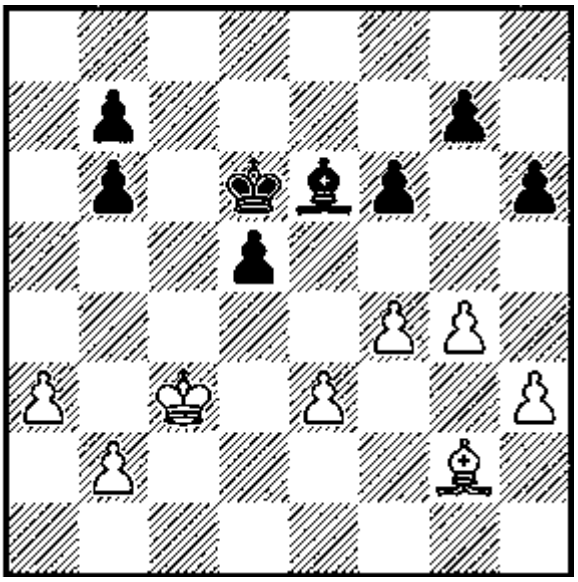
– The attempt to create an impregnable fortress around a "bad bishop."

The first and third points are illustrated by the following case:

Wojtkiewicz – Khalifman
Rakvere 1993

6-22

W?



The hackneyed 1 Kd4? would have allowed Black to set up an impregnable fortress by 1…b5!, followed by …b7-b6. For example, 2 Bf1 Bd7 3 Kc3 Kc5! (not allowing the enemy king to get to b4) 4 b4+ Kd6. Here there can be no zugzwang, since White's bishop is unable to attack two enemy pawns simultaneously (as in the endings examined earlier).

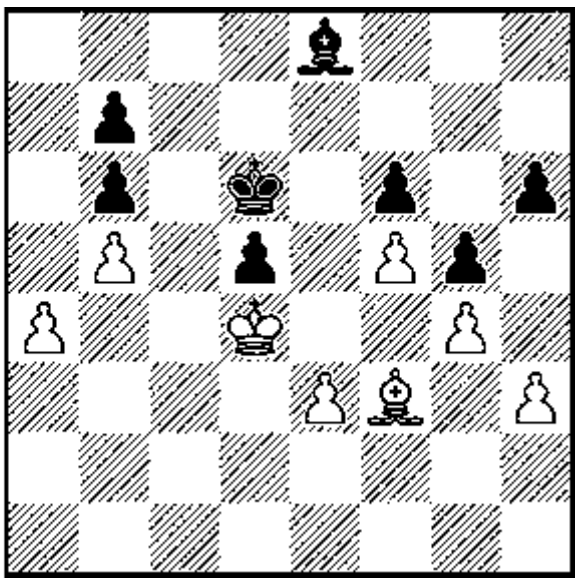
1 a4! g5

1…Bd7! was more stubborn. On 2 Kd4? B×a4 3 B×d5 Bc6 4 e4 g5 5 e5+ fe+ 6 fe+ Ke7, Black should get a draw. The right line would be 2 b3 Kc5 (2…b5 3 a5 Kc5 4 b4+ Kd6 5 Kd4 is hopeless, in view of the weakness of the b7-pawn after the unavoidable e3-e4) 3 Bf3! (3 b4+? Kd6 is premature). And now: 3…g5 4 b4+ Kd6 5 Bd1!, with 6 Kd4 to follow, leads to roughly the same position as in the game, while 3…h5!? gives reasonable chances to survive.

2 Kd4 Bf7 3 Bf3 Be6 4 f5! Bf7 5 b4 Be8 6 b5!

6-23

B



White's pawns have maximally restricted the enemy bishop. Now he brings his bishop around to b3, and plays e3-e4. When he thought up his plan, Wojtkiewicz had to calculate exactly the pawn endgame that now arises by force.

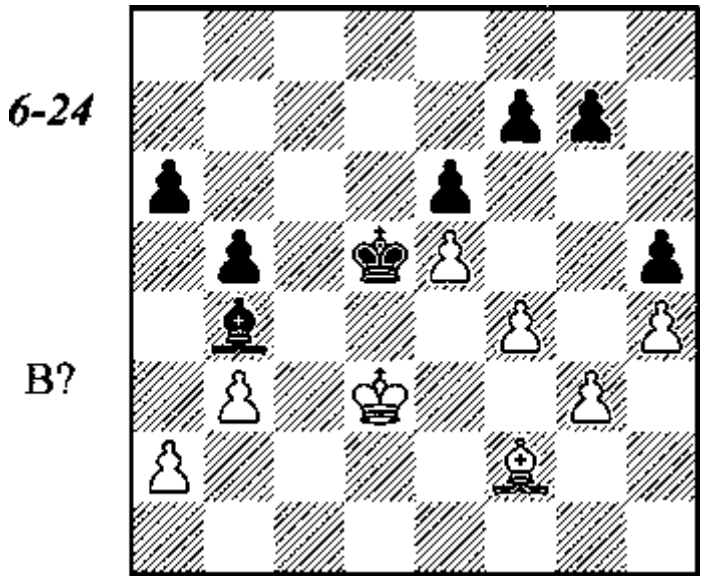
6…Bf7 7 Bd1 Bg8 8 Bb3 Bf7 9 e4 Bg8 10 Ba2 Bf7 11 B×d5 B×d5 12 ed Kc7 13 Kc3! (△ 14 Kb4, 15 a5) **13…Kd6 14 Kc4 Ke5**

Also losing was 14…Kd7 15 Kb4 Kd6 16 a5 K×d5 (16…ba+ 17 K×a5 K×d5 18 Kb6 Kc4 19 K×b7 K×b5 20 Kc7+–) 17 a6 ba 18 ba Kc6 19 Ka4 b5+ 20 Ka5.

15 a5! ba 16 Kc5 a4 17 d6 b6+ 18 Kc6 a3 19 d7 a2 20 d8Q a1Q 21 Qd6+ Ke4 22 K×b6 Kf3 23 Kb7 Kg2 24 Qd3 Qc1 25 b6 Qc5 26 Qb3 Kh2 27 Qf3 Qd4 28 Qc6! K×h3 29 Kc8 Qb4 30 b7 Qf8+ 31 Kd7 K×g4 (31…Qf7+ 32 Kd6 Qf8+ 33 Ke6) **32 Qc8** Black resigned.

And now an example of the undermining theme:

Sveshnikov – Kasparov
USSR ch, Minsk 1979



First, let's evaluate what actually happened in the game.

1…g6⊙ 2 Ke2 (the bishop cannot retreat, owing to 2…Be1) **2…Bc5 3 B×c5?** (the pawn ending is lost) **3…K×c5 4 Kd3 Kb4 5 Kc2 Ka3 6 Kb1 a5 7 Ka1 a4!** (widening the beachhead) **8 ba K×a4 9 Kb1** (9 Kb2 b4) **9…Ka3 10 Ka1 b4 11 Kb1 b3** White resigned.

White could have drawn by avoiding the exchange of bishops. After 3 Be1! Ke4 4 Ba5, I cannot see how Black can improve his position. And if 3…b4 (hoping for 4 Bd2? Ke4 5 Be1 a5 6 Bd2 Bd4 7 Be1 Be3, with zugzwang, or 7 Bc1 Bc3 8 Be3 Be1!), then simply 4 Kf3!=.

But Black was the first to err here – the natural move 1…g6? was a mistake. The pawn should have been left on g7 to support the undermining with …f7-f6! The right way to obtain zugzwang was by making a waiting move with the bishop.

1…Ba5! 2 Ke2 (after 2 a3!? followed by b3-b4, Black could also have tried for the win with the undermining …f7-f6 and …a6-a5) 2…Ke4 3 Bc5 f6! (undermining!) 4 ef gf. Black continues by getting his bishop to c7 (or on 5 Bd6 – to b6), his king to f5, and playing …e6-e5 with a great and probably decisive advantage.

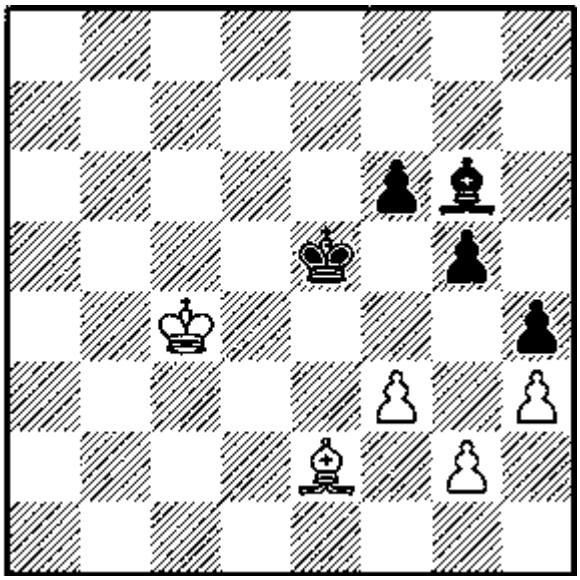
A reader found a second solution for this position: 1…Bc5!. If 2 Be1 b4 3 Ke2 (3 Bd2 Bf2 4 B×b4 B×g3) 3…Ke4, Black wins using one of the methods examined previously: either by playing for zugzwang, or by undermining the enemy pawn chain by f7-f6. Trading bishops also loses: 2 B×c5 K×c5 3 Kc3 a5 4 a3 (4 Kd3 Kb4 5 Kc2 Ka3 6 Kb1 a4; 4 b4+ ab+ 5 Kb3 f6) 4…a4 5 ba ba 6 Kd3 Kd5 7 Kc3 Ke4 8 Kb4 Kf3 9 K×a4 K×g3 10 Kb5 K×f4 11 a4 g5 12 a5 g4 13 a6 g3 14 a7 g2 15 a8Q g1Q, and the queen endgame is completely hopeless for White.

Tragicomedies

Teichmann – Marshall

San Sebastian 1911

6-25



B

Even though Black has an overwhelming positional advantage, the endgame is not as simple as it seems. Both sides made many errors; nor did grandmaster Averbakh avoid errors in his commentaries.

1…Bf7+?

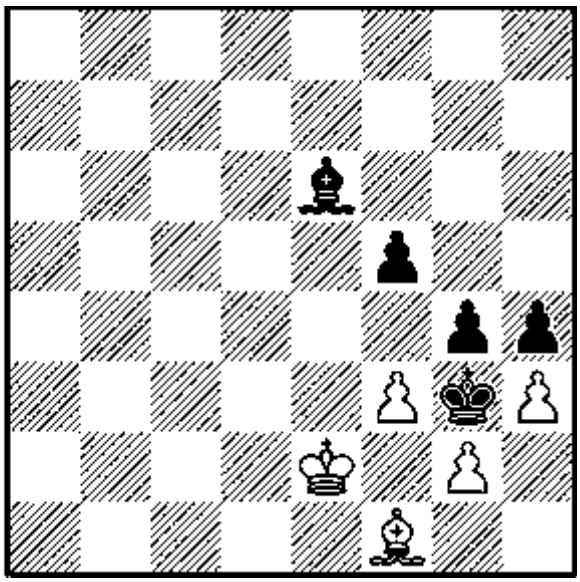
An unfortunate move, allowing the king to return to the defense of the kingside through the d3-square. Now the position becomes drawn.

2 Kd3! Kf4 3 Bf1 Kg3 4 Ke3 Bd5 5 Ke2 f5 6 Ke3 Be6

The bishop sacrifice is insufficient: 6…f4+ 7 Ke2 Bb7 8 Ke1 B×f3 9 gf K×f3 10 Be2+ Kg2 (10…Kg3 11 Bg4 Kg2 12 Ke2) 11 Bf1+ Kg3 12 Ke2=. The only remaining try at making progress is …g5-g4, but this leads to the exchange of too many pawns.

7 Ke2 g4

6-26



W

8 hg

Averbakh recommends 8 fg fg 9 Ke3, which leads to an obvious draw after 9…gh 10 gh Bd7 11 Ke2 Bb5+ 12 Ke1 Bc6 13 Ke2=. And if 9…Bd7 then White replies either with Benko's recommendation of 10 Ke2 Bb5+ 11 Ke1 Bc6 12 Be2! (not 12 hg B×g2, when the h-pawn will queen with check), or with 10 hg! B×g4 11 Bb5! (pointed out by Chéron), giving up the g2-pawn right away, but activating his bishop. For example, 11…Be6 12 Bc6 Bc4 13 Be4 Bf1 14 Bd5 B×g2 15 Be6= (the attempted interference leads to a drawn pawn ending), or 11…K×g2 12 Kf4! (12 Bc6+? Kg3 △ h3-h2, Bh3-g2) 12…Be6 13 Bc6+ Kf2 (after 13…Kh2 14 Bb7 h3 15 Be4 Kg1 16 Kg3 h2 the interference on g2 is impossible) 14 Bd5! Bd7 (14…B×d5 15 Kg4) 15 Bc6! Bh3 16

Bd5 Bg2 17 Be6=.

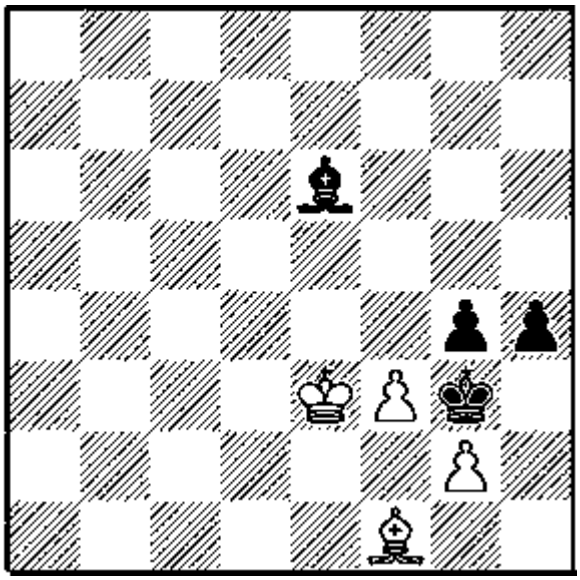
Averbakh considers the text move the decisive error, but he is wrong.

8…fg 9 Ke3?

9 fg! B×g4+ 10 Ke1! was necessary (Averbakh only considers 10 Ke3 Bd7–+), leading to a curious position of reciprocal zugzwang. White to move loses: 11 Bb5 K×g2 12 Bc6+ Kg1. But it is Black to move here, and after 10…Bd7 (10…Bh5 11 Bb5 K×g2 12 Bd7, or 12 Bc6+ first) 11 Ba6 K×g2 (11…Bc6 12 Bc8 B×g2 13 Bd7=) 12 Bb7+ Kg1, White has time to get his king to g3: 13 Ke2! h3 14 Kf3 h2 15 Kg3=.

6-27

B?



9…Bd7?

Black blunders in turn, allowing his opponent to force the draw by the same means indicated in the notes to move 8. The win was 9…gf! 10 gf Bd7⊙ 11 Ke2 (11 f4 Bg4!⊙ 12 Ke4 Kf2–+) 11…Bb5+ 12 Ke1 Bc6 13 f4 Be4! (13…Bg2? 14 f5 h3 15 f6) 14 Ke2 Bf5! 15 Ke1 Bg4⊙.

10 fg! B×g4 11 Ke4??

The loser is always the one who makes the last mistake! We already know that 11 Bb5! would draw. But with the bishop on f1, White is helpless.

11…Bc8 12 Ke3 Bd7⊙ White resigned.

On 13 Ke4 (or 13 Ke2), Black wins by 13…Bc6+ 14 Ke3 B×g2; while if 13 Kd2 Kf2! 14 Bc4 K×g2 15 Ke1 Kg1! 16 Bf1 Be6⊙ 17 Bb5 h3 18 Bc6 h2 19 Be4 Bh3 △ Bg2.

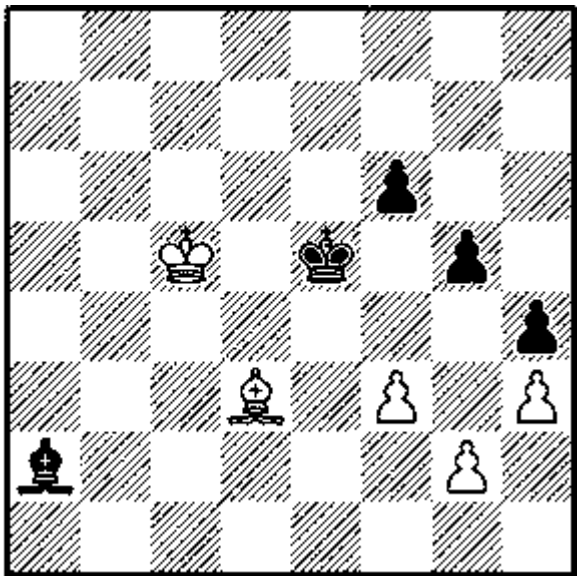
Let’s go back to the starting position of this endgame. Averbakh recommends 1…Bb1!

On 2 Bf1, 2…Kf4 decides, for instance: 3 Kd4 f5!⊙ 4 Kd5 Ke3 5 Ke6 Kf2 6 Bc4 K×g2, or 3 Kd5 Kg3 4 Ke6 f5 5 Kf6 Kf2 6 Bc4 K×g2 7 K×g5 K×h3 8 f4 Kg3–+.

White has greater practical chances with 2 Bd3!? Ba2+! 3 Kc5.

6-28

B



Averbakh contents himself with the single variation 3…Kf4 4 Kd4 Kg3–+. But I think that 3…Kf4? is an error, because of 4 Kd6!

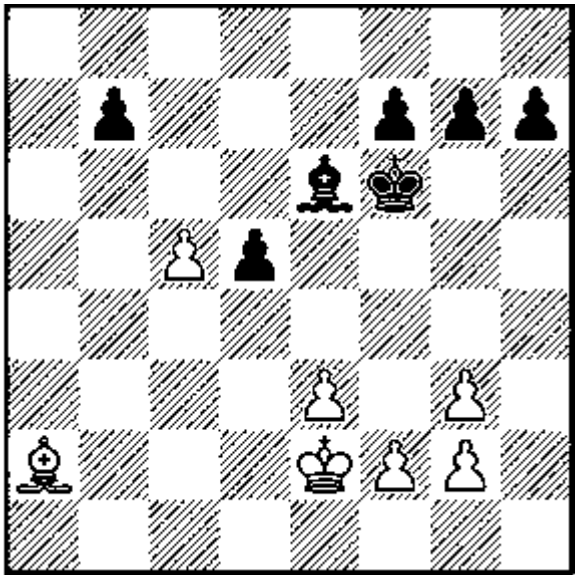
(a) 4…Kg3 5 Ke7 K×g2 (5…f5 6 Kf6!) 6 K×f6 K×f3 7 K×g5 Kg3 8 Kf5! (8 Bf5? Bc4, with …Bf1×h3 to follow) 8…Bd5 (8…K×h3 9 Kf4=) 9 Bf1! (9 Be4? Bc4 or 9 Ke5? Bg2 10 Kd4 B×h3 11 Ke3 Bc8 12 Bf1 Bb7 are both bad) 9…Bc6 10 Ke5 Bd7 11 Ke4 Kf2 12 Kf4 Be6 13 Bb5 B×h3 14 Bc6 (reaching a position from Chéron's line) 14…Bc8 15 Bb7! Be6 16 Bd5!, etc.

(b) 4…f5 5 Ke7 Bd5 6 Bf1! (6 Kf6? is a mistake, in view of 6…g4 7 fg fg 8 hg B×g2 9 g5 h3 10 g6 h2 11 g7 Bd5–+) 6…g4 (6…Ke5 7 Kd7 is not dangerous either) 7 fg fg 8 hg K×g4 9 Kf6 Be4 (9…Kg3 10 Kg5 Bc6 11 Kh5=) 10 Ke5! Ba8 11 Kf6 Bb7 12 Kg6 Be4+ 13 Kh6!= (but not 13 Kf6? Kf4!, when White is in zugzwang).

Black's king stands very well on e5, where it shoulders aside the enemy king. Before attacking the g2-pawn, Black must first strengthen his position. Simplest is 3…f5!, for example: 4 Kc6 g4! 5 fg fg 6 hg Bd5+ 7 Kc5 B×g2 8 g5 h3 9 g6 Kf6!–+ or 4 Bf1 Kf4 5 Kd6 (5 Kd4 Bb1!⊙) 5…Kg3 6 Ke5 Bb1 7 Kf6 Kf2 8 Bc4 K×g2 9 K×g5 K×h3–+.

And 3…Be6! 4 Ba6 f5 5 Bf1 Bc8!? or 5…Bd5 6 Be2 Bb7 7 Bf1 Kf4 8 Kd4 Bc8!⊙–+ are not bad either. However, the hasty 5…g4? would let slip the win: 6 fg fg 7 hg B×g4 8 Ba6! (on 8 Kc4? Bc8! 9 Kc3 Kf4 10 Kd2 Kg3 11 Ke3 Bd7!⊙–+ or 11 Ke1 Bg4!⊙–+, we get zugzwangs already familiar to us) 8…Be6 (8…Bf5 9 Kc4) 9 Bb7! Bf5 10 Kc4 Be4 11 Bc8=.

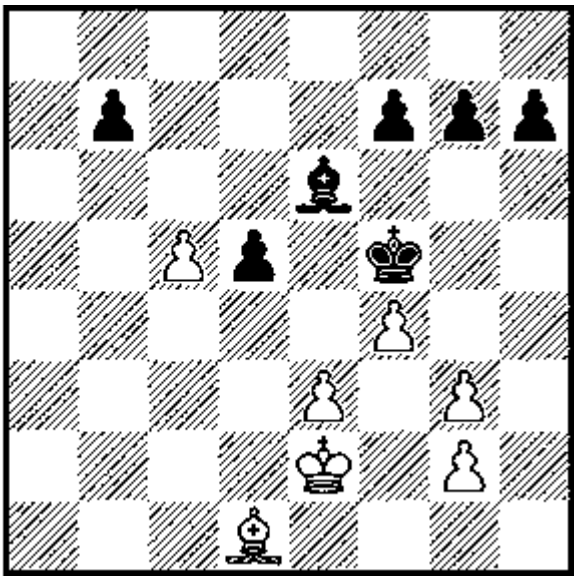
Euwe – Menchik
Hastings 1930/31



White's king wants to get to d4. Black will prevent that with …Ke5; after White responds with f2-f4+, he will try to counterattack with …Kf5 and …Kg4.

The accurate prophylactic move 1 Bb3!? is worth serious consideration. The idea is 1…Ke5 2 f4+ Kf5 3 Bd1! (covering g4 and intending 4 Kd3).

6-30



B?

For example, 3…d4 4 Bc2+! Kg4 5 ed K×g3 6 Ke3 f5 7 Bd1 Bd5 8 Bf3+–; or 3…Kg4 4 Kf2+ Kf5 5 Bf3! g5 (5…Kf6 6 Ke2 Ke7 7 Kd3 Kd7 8 Kd4 Kc6 9 f5 B×f5 10 B×d5+ Kc7 11 B×f7+–) 6 g4+ Kf6 7 Ke2! (7 f5 is possible, too) 7…Bd7 8 Kd3 Bc6 9 Kd4 gf 10 ef Ke6 11 g5 Kf5 12 g3+–.

However, as Artur Yusupov has shown, Black successfully maintains his defensive position with 3…Kf6! 4 Kd2(d3) Bf5 and 5…Be4. The exchange of bishops on e4 (after 5 Bf3 Be4) or f3 leads to a drawn pawn ending.

1 Kd3 Ke5 2 g4

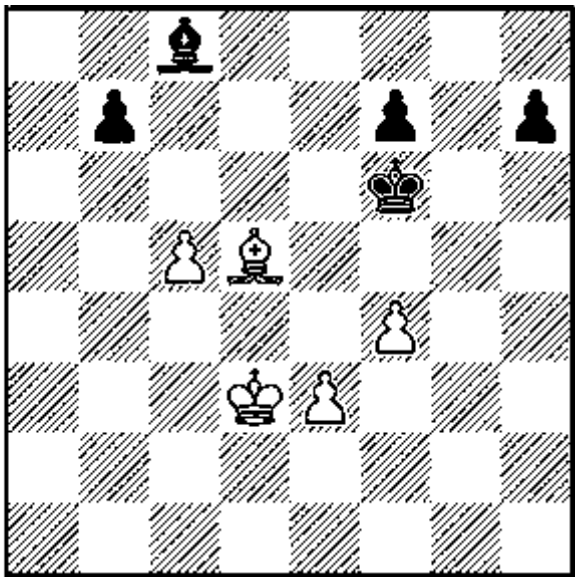
If 2 f4+ Kf5 3 Ke2 (3 Kd4 Kg4 4 B×d5 B×d5 5 K×d5 K×g3=) 5…Kg4 6 Kf2, then 6…d4! (6…h5 7 Bb3 g6 is also possible) 7 B×e6+ fe 8 ed g6.

2…g5!

Black loses after 2…B×g4? 3 f4+ Ke6 4 e4 Ke7 5 B×d5 Bc8 6 Kc4!

3 g3 B×g4 4 f4+ gf 5 gf+ (5 ef+ Ke6 6 Kd4 Bf3=) **5…Kf6 6 B×d5 Bc8**

6-31



W?

Comparing this position to the analogous position after 2…B×g4?, here Black has a passed h-pawn. For this reason 7 Kc4? Be6! does not win. On 7 Kc3?! Ke7 8 Kb4, advancing the h-pawn gives Black serious counterplay: 8…h5! 9 Kb5 h4 10 Kb6 h3 11 Kc7 Be6 12 B×b7 Bc4 △ Bf1-g2.

White only keeps real winning chances by 7 e4! Ke7 8 Ke3! f6 9 f5!, followed by Kf4, and then either e4-e5 or Kg4-h5.

7 Bf3?!

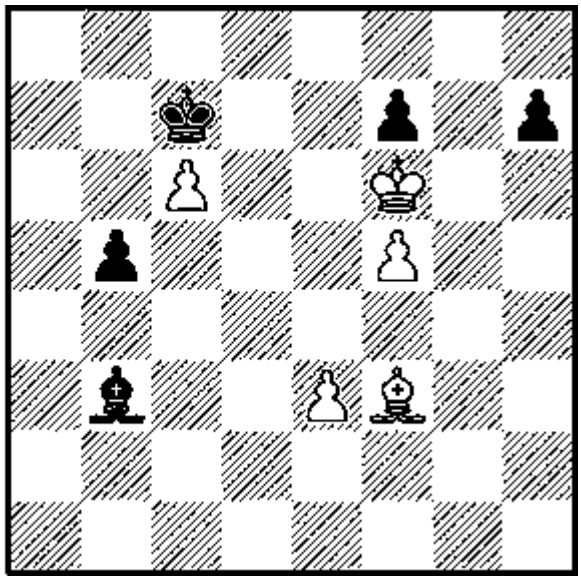
White restrains the passed pawn, but now Black's king is able to get to c7.

7…Ke7 8 Kc4 Kd8 (9 Kb5 allows 9…Kc7) **9 Kd5?! b6! 10 c6?!**

Euwe fails to sense the danger. He had to resign himself to a draw after 10 Bh5.

10…Kc7 11 Ke5 Be6 12 f5 Bb3 (12…Bc4) **13 Kf6 b5**

6-32



W?

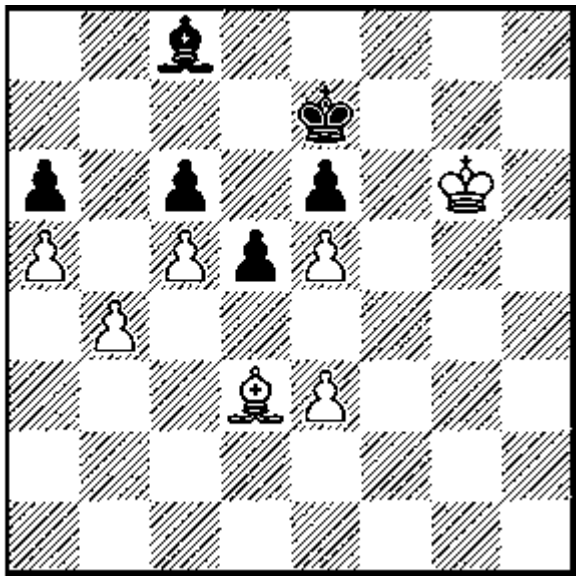
14 Kg7?

The decisive mistake. 14 e4! would have given White the draw.

14…b4–+ 15 K×h7 Bc2 16 Kg7 b3 17 Bd5 b2 18 Ba2 K×c6 19 f6 Kd6 20 e4 B×e4 21 K×f7 Bd5+ 22 B×d5 b1Q 23 Kg7 Qg1+ 24 Kf8 K×d5 White resigned.

Exercises

6-33



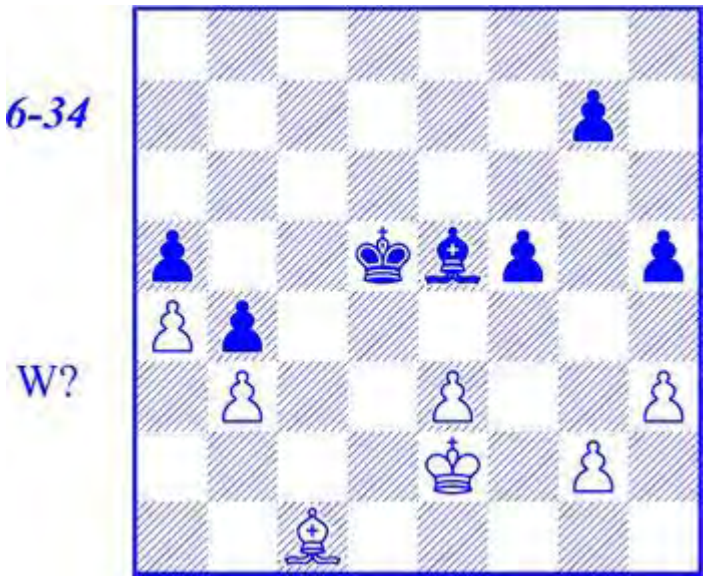
6/6
W?

Barrier

Although there are occasional cases where a player can save himself with his pawns on the same color as his bishop, such a defensive method is not to be recommended in the majority of cases. The more secure defensive method is ***to control the squares of one color with the bishop, and of the other color, with pawns.*** This places a barrier in the path of the enemy king, making it difficult to invade our camp.

If the opponent has a passed pawn, the king must usually blockade it.

I. Ivanov – Christiansen
Pasadena 1983



White's position is difficult. The e3-pawn greatly restricts the bishop's mobility; and on the other wing, the same role is played by the enemy pawns (White's bishop will not likely ever have the opportunity to attack them from behind.)

Nevertheless, as Christiansen pointed out, White has a comparatively simple way to draw – he must sacrifice a pawn, opening the diagonal for his bishop and erecting an impassable barrier before the black king.

1 Kd3! Bc3 2 e4+! fe+ 3 Ke2=

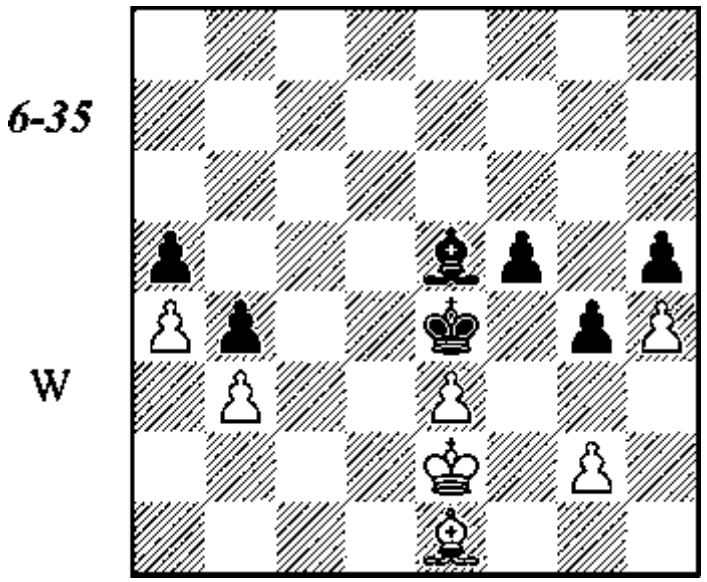
It is worth mentioning that the pawn endgame after 2 Bd2? B×d2 3 K×d2 is lost: 3…h4! (but not 3…Ke4? 4 h4! f4 5 ef K×f4 6 Kd3 Kg3 7 Kc4=) 4 Kd3 g6⊙ (4…Ke5? 5 Kc4=; 4…g5 5 Kd2 Ke4 6 Ke2 f4 7 ef gf!–+) 5 Kd2 Ke4 6 Ke2 f4 7 ef K×f4 8 Kf2 Ke4 9 Ke2 Kd4 10 Kd2 g5⊙–+.

Ivanov failed to find the pawn sacrifice, and wound up in a hopeless position.

1 Bd2? Ke4 2 Be1 g5 3 h4

If 3 Bf2, then 3…h4! 4 Be1 (4 Bg1 Bc7 5 Bf2 Bb6⊙ 6 Kd2 f4 7 Ke2 B×e3 8 Be1 Kd4) 4…Bb2 5 Bf2 (5 g3 g4! 6 gh gh 7 Bg3 Bc1; 5 Bd2 Bc3 6 Bc1 g4) 5…Bc1 6 Bg1 g4 7 Bf2 g3 8 Bg1 Bb2 9 Kd2 Be5 10 Ke2 Bc3⊙–+ (or 10…Bc7 11 Kd2 Bb6 12 Ke2 f4–+).

3…g4



4 g3

If 4 Bf2 g3 5 Be1, Black "triangulates" with the bishop: 5…Bd6! 6 Kd2 Bc7! 7 Ke2 Be5, and then wins the h4-pawn: 8 Bd2 (8 Kd2 Bc3+) 8…Bf6 9 Be1 B×h4 10 Kd2 f4–+. However, the text is no better.

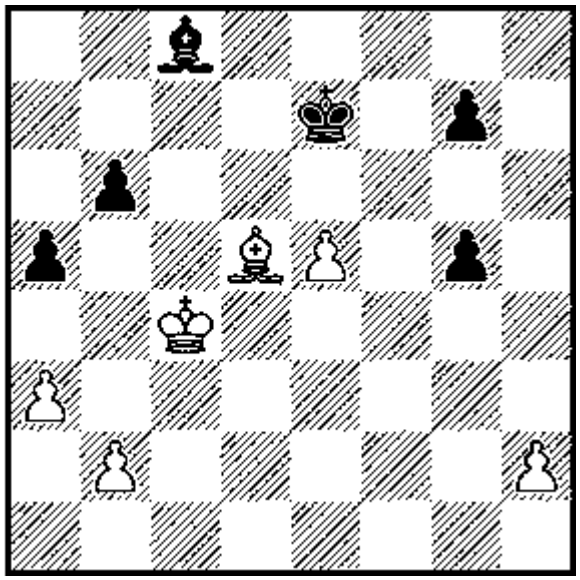
4…Bd6 5 Bf2 Bc5 6 Bg1 f4! 7 gf g3 8 f5 Be7 9 Kf1 Kf3! 10 e4 g2+ 11 Ke1 B×h4+ 12 Kd2 K×e4 13 Ke2 Bf6

White resigned (14 Kf2 Bd4+.)

In the following endgame, Dolmatov successfully resolved much more complex problems.

Sveshnikov – Dolmatov
Yerevan zt 1982

6-36



B?

1…Ba6+!

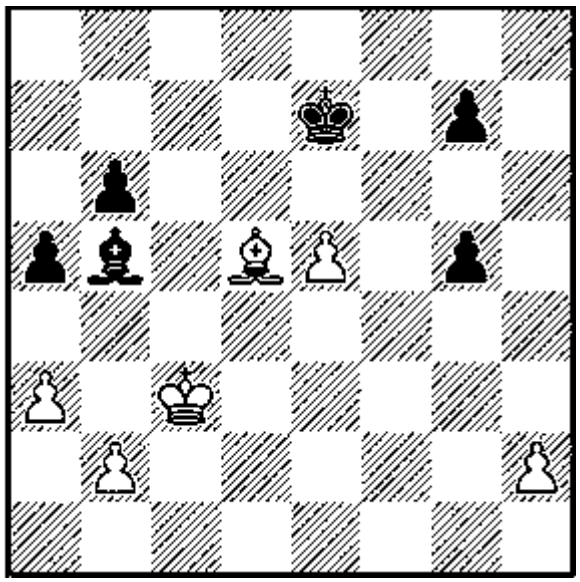
The weaker 1…Bd7?! 2 Bg2 Be8 3 Kd5 Bd7 4 Bf3⊙ Be8 5 e6 would leave Black facing the difficult problem of how to deal with threats on both wings (Kd5-e5-f5 or b2-b3, a3-a4 and Bf3-e2-b5).

2 Kb3 Bb5!

The king cannot be allowed to get to a4 – then White could secure the b5-square as well by continuing b2-b3 and Bc4. Also risky is 2…Bc8 3 Bc6 Ke6 4 Ka4 Ba6 5 Bb5 Bc8 6 Bc4+ K×e5 7 Kb5.

3 Kc3

6-37



B?

3…Kf8!!

A brilliant defensive move discovered through the method of exclusion. Let's follow the grandmaster's logic.

The position after 3…Bd7?! (or 3…Be8?!) 4 Kc4, with Bg2 and Kd5 to follow, we have already rated as unfavorable. In any event, it is better not to choose such a course if we do not have to.

3…Bf1? loses to 4 b4! ab+ (otherwise, after the exchange of pawns on a5, White's king obtains the important c5-square) 5 K×b4, and there is no defense against 6 Bc4.

3…Ke8? is bad: 4 b4! ab+ 5 K×b4 Bd7 6 e6 and 7 Kb5. 3…Kd7? fails for the same reason.

Finally, on 3…Kd8?! there follows 4 Bc4 Bc6 5 Bg8! (threatening 6 Kc4) 5…Bb5 6 Kd4, and the king gets in via c4 or d5.

But after 3…Kf8!! 4 Bc4 Bc6, the g8-square is covered, and 5 Ba2 is not dangerous, in view of 5…Ke7 6 Kc4 Ke6.

4 b4

Before changing the contour of the game, White should have tried one more positional trap: 4 Be6 Ke7 5 Bc8!? (more clever than 5 Bf5 Ba6! 6 Kd4 Bb7!). The simplistic 5…Kd8? 6 Bf5 Ke7 would leave Black in serious, perhaps insurmountable difficulties after 7 Kd4 Ba6 (7…Bc6 8 Be4 and 9 Kd5) 8 Ke3! Bb7 9 Kf2, with the awful threat of Kg3-g4. The threat of marching the king to g4 must be met by a timely transfer of the bishop to d5: 5…Bf1! 6 Kd4 Bg2 7 Ke3 Bd5!, and on 8 Kf2 Black now has 8…Be6.

4…ab+ 5 K×b4 Bd7 6 Bb3 (White also gets nothing from 6 e6 Be8 7 Kc4 Ke7 8 Kd4 Kd6) **6…Ke7**

White can only seize the b5-square with his king by playing Ba4 first; and then Black's king can attack the e5-pawn.

7 Ba4 Bg4 8 Bc6 Ke6

Of course not 8…Be2? 9 Bd5 and 10 Bc4.

9 Kb5 K×e5 10 K×b6 Bd1 11 h3

11 a4 B×a4 12 B×a4 Kf4 13 Bd7 g4=.

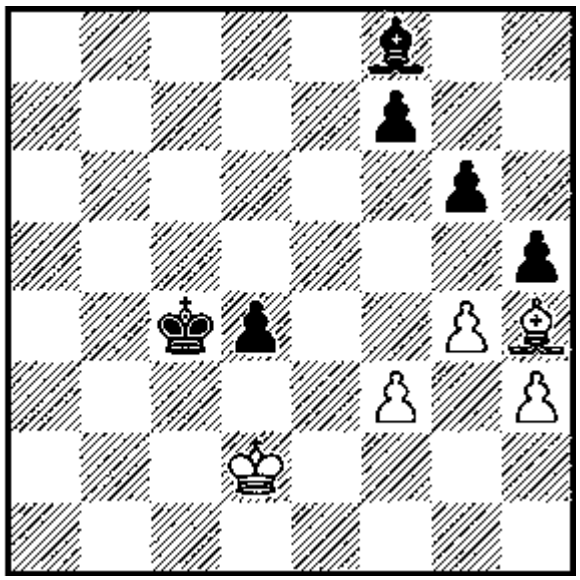
11…g4 12 hg B×g4 13 a4 g5 14 a5 Be2 Draw.

Setting up a barrier is an effective defensive tool, but it too is not always sufficient. Sometimes the opponent can overcome the barrier by offering an exchange of bishops. When doing so, it is necessary to calculate the pawn ending accurately.

Donner – Smyslov

Havana 1964

6-38



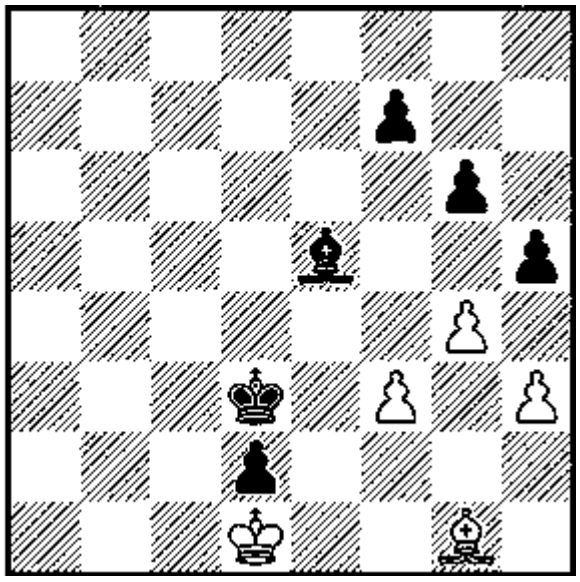
B

With the pawn on g2, Black could not have broken through the enemy defenses; but now it is possible, although with considerable difficulty – thanks to the weakness of the pawn at f3.

1…Bh6+ 2 Kc2 d3+ 3 Kd1 Kd4 4 Bf2+ Kc3 5 Bb6 d2! 6 Bf2 Kd3 7 Bb6 Bf4 8 Bf2 Be5⊙ 9 Bg1

If 9 gh gh 10 Bg1, then 10…Bc3⊙ (premature would be 10…Bd4 11 Bh2, when Black cannot play 11…Ke3 because of 12 Bg1+ K×f3 13 B×d4=) 11 Bb6 Bd4 12 Ba5 (12 B×d4 K×d4 13 K×d2 h4 14 Ke2 f5 15 Kd2 f4⊙) 12…Ke3 13 B×d2+ K×f3 14 Ke1 Kg2 15 Ke2 Be5! △ …f5-f4-f3.

6-39



B?

9…h4!

Smyslov prepares the exchange of bishops. The immediate 9…Bd4? leads only to a draw: 10 B×d4 K×d4 11 K×d2 h4 12 g5!.

10 Bf2 Bc3⊙ 11 Bg1 Bd4! 12 B×d4

After 12 Bh2 Black sacrifices the bishop: 12…Ke3! 13 Bg1+ K×f3 14 B×d4 Kg2 15 K×d2 K×h3 16 g5 Kg2 17 Be5 h3 18 Ke3 h2 19 B×h2 K×h2–+.

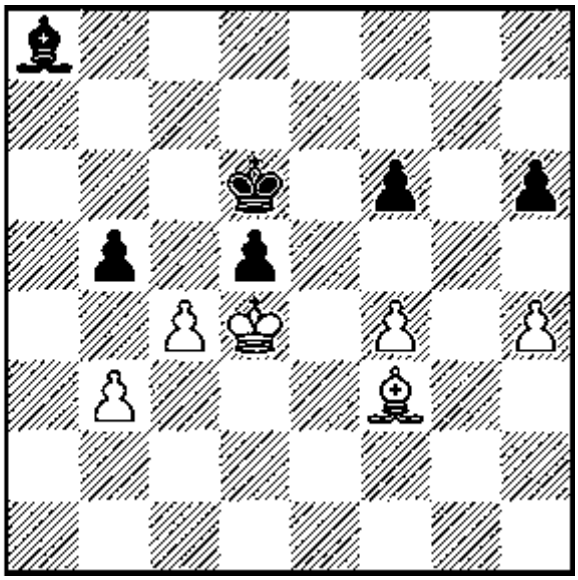
12…K×d4 13 K×d2 Ke5 14 Ke3 g5

White resigned, in view of 15 f4+ (15 Ke2 Kf4 16 Kf2 f6⊙) 15…gf+ 16 Kf3 f6 17 Kf2 Ke4 18 Ke2 f3+ 19 Kf1 f2! (the standard triangulation maneuver, as seen in the game Fahrni-Alapin, does not work here, since Black's king does not have the f5-square available) 20 K×f2 (20 Ke2 f1Q+) 20…Kf4⊙–+.

Tragicomedies

Matanovic – Uhlmann
Skopie 1976

6-40



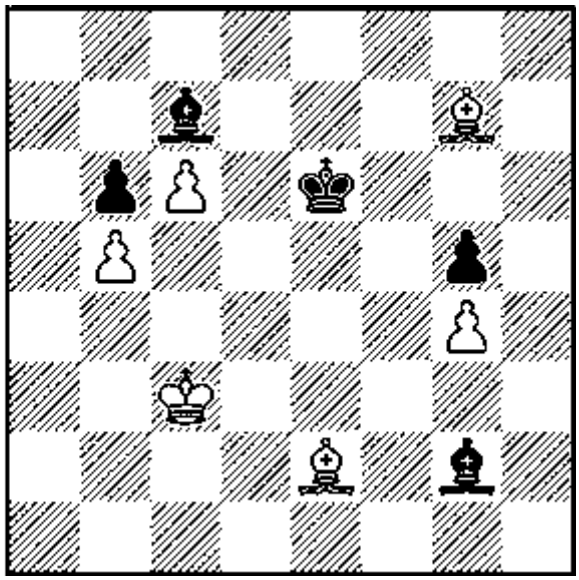
B?

Black chose the desperate **1…dc? 2 B×a8 cb**, and after **3 Be4 b2 4 h5 b4 5 Kc4**, he resigned.

As Matanovic pointed out, Black could have saved the game by playing 1…bc 2 bc Bc6 3 B×d5 Be8 4 c5+ Kc7. White's king cannot get through the barrier.

Exercises

6-41



6/7
B?

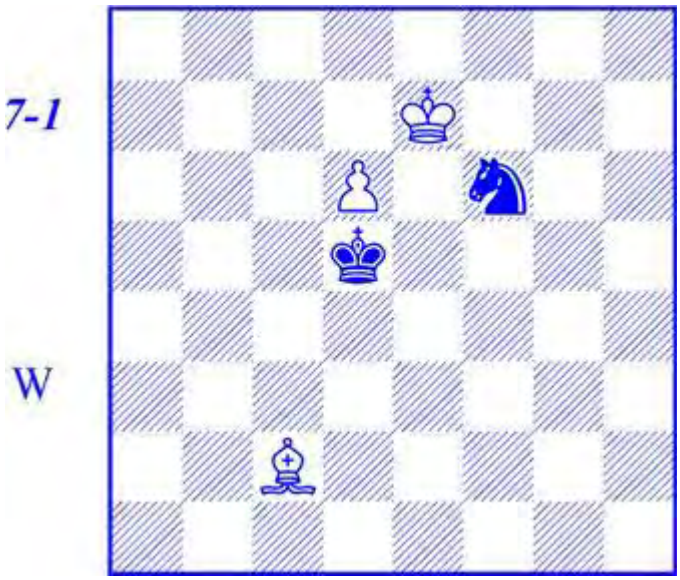
Chapter 7

Bishop versus Knight

With this configuration of material there is not, in my opinion, a single fundamental theoretical position that would be worth memorizing. For the practical player, what is important is to become acquainted with the overall ideas, and with some concrete battle techniques.

Bishop and Pawn vs. Knight

V. Bron, 1955



The outcome in all endgames of this sort depends wholly on whether the stronger side can place his opponent in zugzwang. In the present case, this is possible.

1 Bb3+ Kc5

On 1…Ke5 2 Be6⊙, the game ends at once.

2 Ba2 Kc6 (2…Ng4 3 Ke6) **3 Ke6 Nh7** (3…Kc5 4 Bb1 or 4 Bd5) **4 Bd5+ Kc5 5 Ke7 Nf6**

5…Nf8 6 Be4⊙ is no better.

6 Bf3 Ng8+ 7 Ke6 Nf6 8 Be4!+–

The decisive zugzwang!

Let's put Black's king on e5. Now the variations are different, but the evaluation of the position does not change, and neither does the goal of White's maneuvers – zugzwang.

1 Bb3 Kf5 2 Bf7 Kg5 (2…Ke5 3 Be6⊙) **3 Be6 Kg6 4 Kf8! Nh7+** (4…Kh6 5 Kf7 Kg5 6 Bh3⊙) **5 Ke8! Nf6+ 6 Ke7**⊙ (in order to give his opponent the move, White has triangulated with his king) **6…Kg7 7 Bf7 Ng4! 8 Bd5** (but not 8 d7? Ne5 9 d8Q Nc6+) **8…Ne5** (8…Nf6 9 Be4! Ng8+ 10 Ke6 Nf6 11 Bf5⊙) **9 Be4 Kg8 10 Ke6 Nf7 11 d7 Kf8 12 Bd5 Nd8+ 13 Kd6**⊙ **Kg7 14 Ke7**+–.

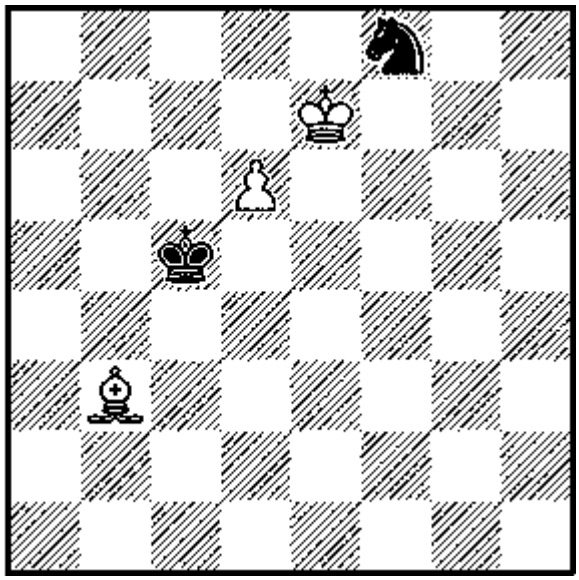
Now, in the diagrammed position, let's move White's king to c7. It is not hard to see that Black can draw this – and not just with his knight on f6, but also on f8 or e5, which brings us to the conclusion: ***For a successful defense, it is important to keep the knight far away from the enemy king***.

But even for a knight placed close to the enemy king, zugzwang is not at all a sure thing. Let's return once again to the diagrammed position. Suppose that after 1 Bb3+ Kc5 White, instead of the waiting move 2 Ba2!, chose 2 Ke6? Nh7! 3 Ke7 (there is nothing better) 3…Nf8!

M. Mandelail, 1938

7-2
$

W



4 Bc2 (White cannot allow the knight check at g6) **4…Kc6** (4…Kd5 is also possible) **5 Ba4+**

With the bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, the king will shuttle between c6 and d5, avoiding the mined squares c5 and e5. For example: 5 Bb1 Kd5! 6 Bd3 Kc6! (6…Kc5? 7 Be4⊙, 6…Ke5? 7 Be4 ⊙) 7 Be4+ Kc5⊙.

5…Kc5 6 Be8 Kd5 7 Bf7+ Kc6 8 Bh5 Kc5!=

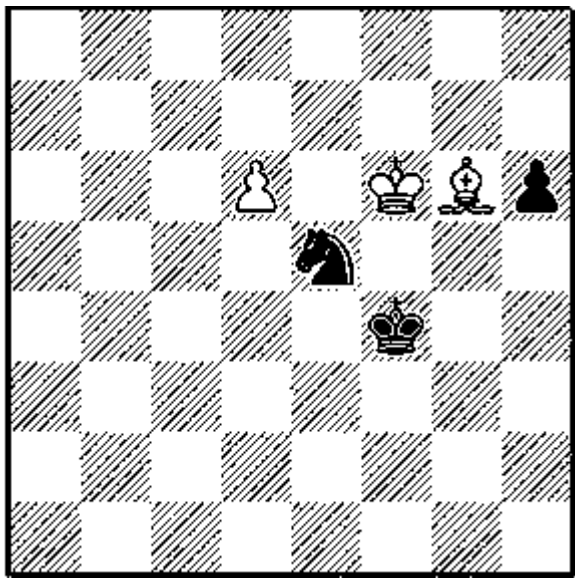
8…Kd5? is a mistake, in view of 9 Bf3+ Ke5(c5) 10 Be4⊙+–. But now we have a position of reciprocal zugzwang, with White to move; and he cannot give the move back to his opponent.

It is not uncommon in such situations for Black to have a passed pawn too. The stronger side's strategy remains unchanged: White must still play for zugzwang. The defender, however, now has a new resource: ***deflection***. Sometimes, the pawn distracts the bishop from controlling an important square, which the knight then immediately occupies. Or the reverse can happen: sometimes the knight is sacrificed to allow the pawn to queen.

Lisitsyn – Zagorovsky

7-3

W?



1 Be8? would be a mistake in view of 1…h5! (deflection) 2 B×h5 Nd7+ 3 Ke6 Nb6. The knight stands far away from the king, and the position would be drawn.

1 Bf5! h5 2 Ke6 h4 3 Kf6⊙ Nc6

3…h3 is no better: 4 B×h3 Ke4 5 Ke6 Kd4 6 Bf5⊙.

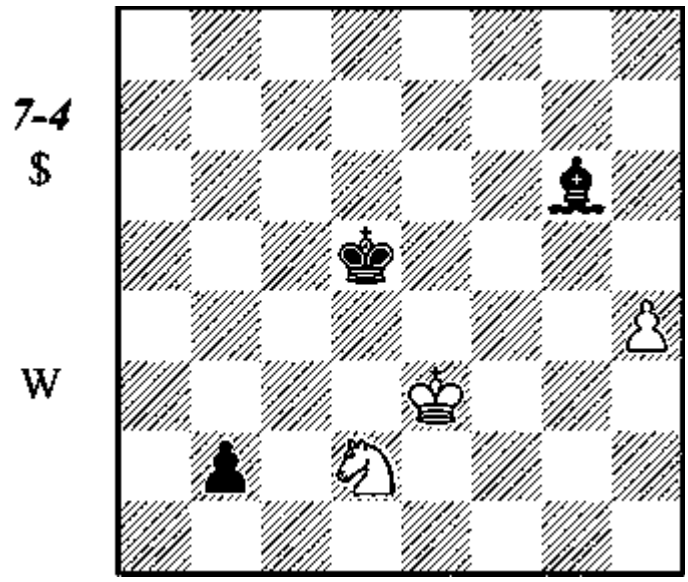
4 d7 Nd8 5 Be6 (△ Bd5, Ke7) **5…Ke4 6 Bh3**

The most accurate move, threatening 7 Bg2+ and 8 Ke7. But the immediate 6 Ke7 Nb7 7 Bc4 h3 8 Ba6+– was also possible.

6…Kf3 7 Ke7 Nb7 (7…Nc6+ 8 Kd6 Nd8 9 Kc7 Nf7 10 Be6+–) **8 Bf1 Kg3 9 Ba6 Nc5 10 d8Q** Black resigned.

Now, here is a more complex example.

Nazarevsky – Simonenko
Kiev 1939



1 h5!

Exploiting the fact that the pawn is temporarily poisoned (1…B×h5? 2 Kd3=), to advance it further. On 1 Ke2? Kd4 the position is lost.

1…Bh7 2 h6 Kc5 3 Ke2 Kd4 4 Kd1 Kc3

Let's examine the other attempts to play for zugzwang:

4…Bd3 5 Ke1 Ke3 works well if White plays 6 Kd1? Kf2⊙. But White saves himself if he sacrifices a pawn to deflect the bishop: 6 h7! B×h7 7 Nc4+.

4…Kd3 5 Ke1 Kc3 6 Ke2! (but not 6 Kd1? Bd3 7 Ke1 Kc2⊙). Now 6…Bg6 is met by 7 Ke1!, leading back to the game line (7 Ke3? Bd3⊙ or 7 Kd1? Bd3 8 Ke1 Kc2⊙ would be a mistake). And if 6…Kc2 (counting on 7 Ke1? Bd3⊙ or 7 Ke3? Kd1⊙), then White saves himself with the knight sacrifice indicated by Konstantinopolsky: 7 Nc4!! Bd3+ 8 Ke3 B×c4 9 h7 b1Q 10 h8Q=.

5 Ke1 Kc2 6 Ke2 Bd3+ 7 Ke1!

7 Ke3? Kc3⊙ is a mistake.

7…Kc1 8 Nb3+ Kb1 9 Kd1!

The final touch. 9 Nd2+? Kc2⊙ or 9 Kd2? Ka2 10 Nc1+ Ka3 both lose.

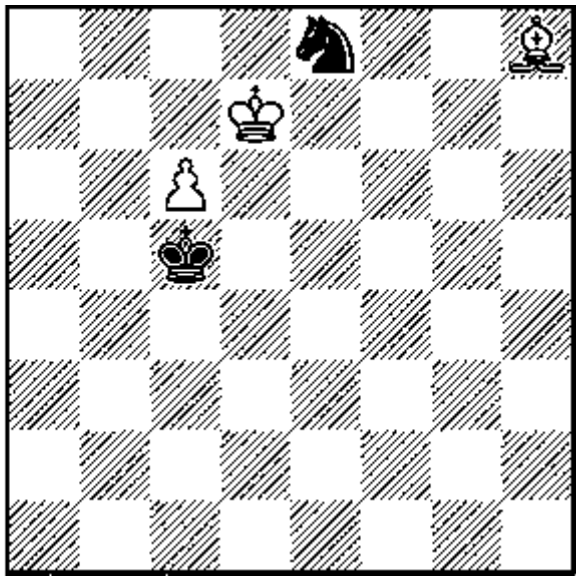
9…Bc2+ 10 Ke2 Bh7 11 Kd1 Bc2+ 12 Ke2 Bg6 13 Kd1 Bh5+ 14 Kd2 Ka2 15 h7 b1Q 16 Nc1+ Ka3 17 h8Q Draw

Exercises

In the following exercises, you must answer the question, "What should be the result of this game?"

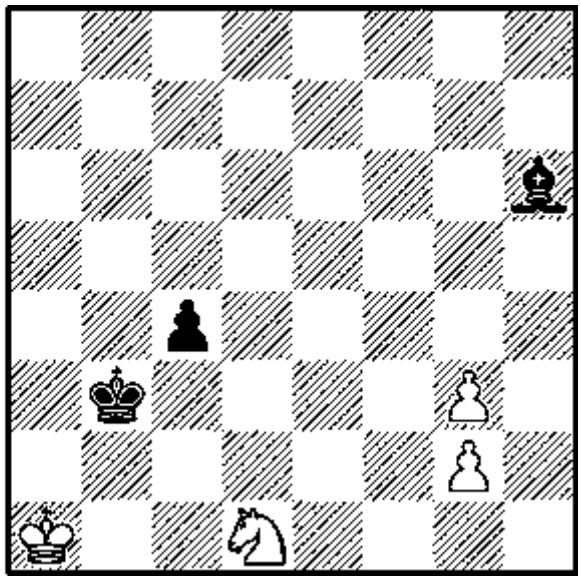
7-5

7/1
W?



7-6

7/2
W?

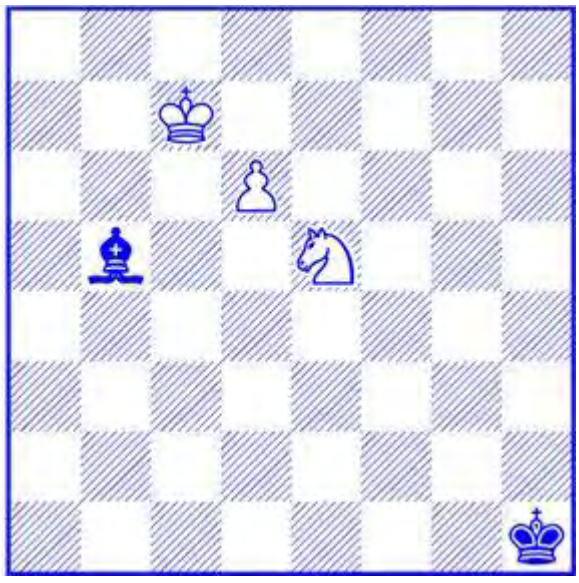


Knight and Pawn vs. Bishop

The bishop is a strong piece, sometimes capable of preventing a pawn from queening even without the king's help.

7-7

B

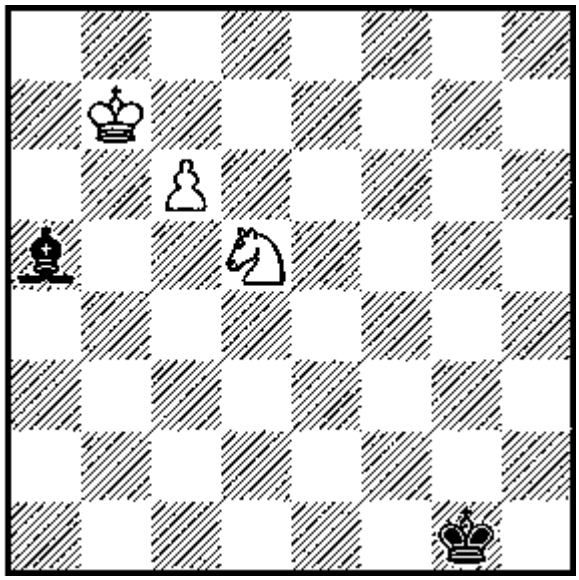


1…Be8! (White threatened interference with 2 Nc6) **2 Nd7 Kg2 3 Kd8 Bg6 4 Ke7 Bf5 5 Nc5** (△ Ne6) **5…Bc8!**=

Black was saved, first of all, because the pawn had not yet reached the seventh rank, and second,

because the bishop's diagonal was sufficiently long: five squares. Knight and king are only capable of interdicting two squares each, which leaves the fifth square free.

If we move the position one file to the left, the diagonal grows shorter, and Black loses.

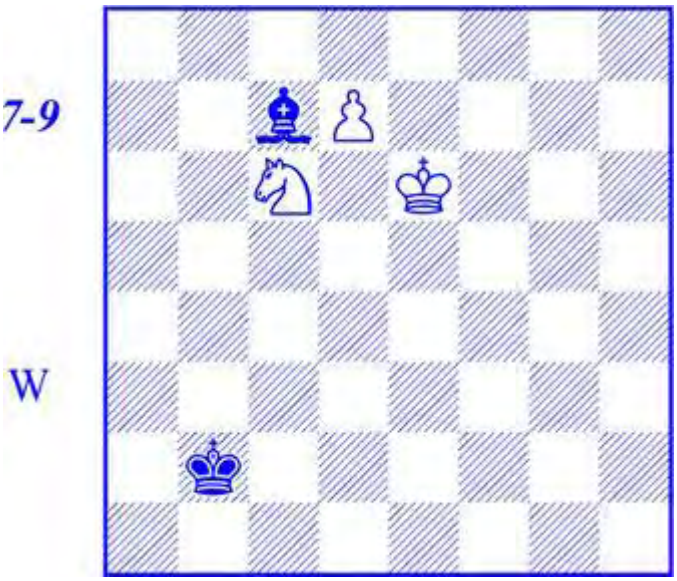


1…Bd8 2 Nf4 Kf2 3 Ne6 Ba5 4 Ka6+–.

These examples show us the ***two basic techniques for promoting the pawn: driving the bishop off the diagonal, and interference.***

If the bishop cannot handle the job on its own (which is what happens most often), then the outcome depends upon the position of the defending king: can it prevent the bishop from being interfered with or driven off?

Y. Averbakh, 1958



With the king at a1 or b1, White would win by Kd5-c4-b5-a6-b7. But here (or with the king at c1, also), Black's king is in time to help the bishop: **1 Kd5 Kc3! 2 Kc5 Kd3! 3 Kb5 Ke4 4 Ka6 Kd5 5 Kb7 Kd6**=

Note Black's accurate first move: 1…Ka3? would be refuted by 2 Kc4! Ka4 3 Kc5⊙+– (this is how White wins if the king is on a2 in the starting position). And if 1…Kb3? (hoping for 2 Kc5? Ka4, when White is the one in zugzwang), then 2 Nd4+ Kb4 3 Ne6 Ba5 4 Kc6, with the unstoppable threat of interference by 5 Nc7.

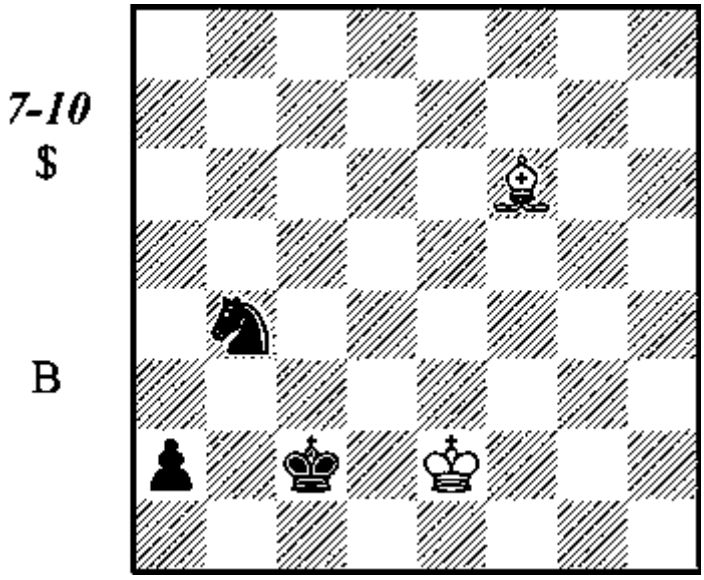
The other plan, 1 Ke7 Kc3(b3) 2 Nd8 Kc4 3 Ne6 Ba5 4 Kd6 Bb4+! does not win for White either. It is important that White does not have the 5 Nc5 interference – the king covers that square.

But with the king at c1 in the starting position, this plan leads to the queening of the pawn: 1

Ke7! Kb2 (1…Kd2 2 Nd4! Ke3 3 Ne6 Bg3 4 Ke8 Bh4 5 Nf8 Ke4 6 Ng6 △ 7 Ne7) 2 Nd4! Ba5 3 Ne6 Kc3 4 Kd6 Bb4+ 5 Nc5! Ba5 6 Nb7 Bb6 Kc6+–, or 3…Bb4+ 4 Kf6! Bc3+ 5 Kf5 Ba5 6 Ke4 Kb3 7 Kd5 △ Kc6, Nc7+–.

Tragicomedies

Stein – Dorfman
USSR 1970



The bishop has a hard time with a rook's pawn, since it has only one diagonal to work with. However, Dorfman played too straightforwardly, and was unable to garner the full point.

1…Nd3 2 Ba1□ (Black threatened the interference 2…Nb2) **2…Nb2 3 Ke1**

3 Ke3 must be answered by 3…Na4! 4 Ke2 Kc1! (see below), or 5 Kd4 Kb1 5 Kd3 Nc5+ 6 Kc3 K×a1–+. Whereas, in the game Sakaev-Sunye Neto (Sao Paulo 1991), after 3…Kb1? 4 Kd2! the win was gone.

3…Kb1 4 Kd2 K×a1 5 Kc1! Nc4 6 Kc2 Draw. We know the concluding position from the chapter "Knight vs. Pawns" (diagram 2-2).

The road to victory was noted as far back as the 19th century by Horwitz. Black should have played 3…Na4! (instead of 3…Kb1?) 4 Ke2 Kc1. Possible variations are:

(a) 5 Kd3 Kb1 6 Kd2 Nb2⊙ 7 Kc3 K×a1 8 Kc2 Nd3⊙–+;

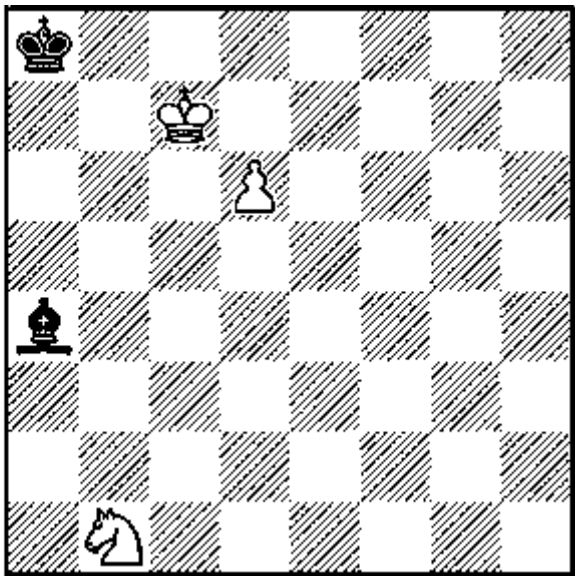
(b) 5 Ke3 Kb1 6 Kd3 (6 Kd2 Nb2⊙) 6…Nc5+! (of course not 6…K×a1? 7 Kc2=) 7 Kc3 (7 Kd2 Nb3+) 7…K×a1 8 Kc2 Nb3(d3)⊙–+;

(c) 5 Ke1 Nc5! 6 Ke2 (6 Bg7 Nd3+ and 7…Nb2) 6…Kb1 7 Kd1 (7 Bg7 Na4) 7…Nd3 8 Kd2 Nb2⊙–+.

Exercises

7-11

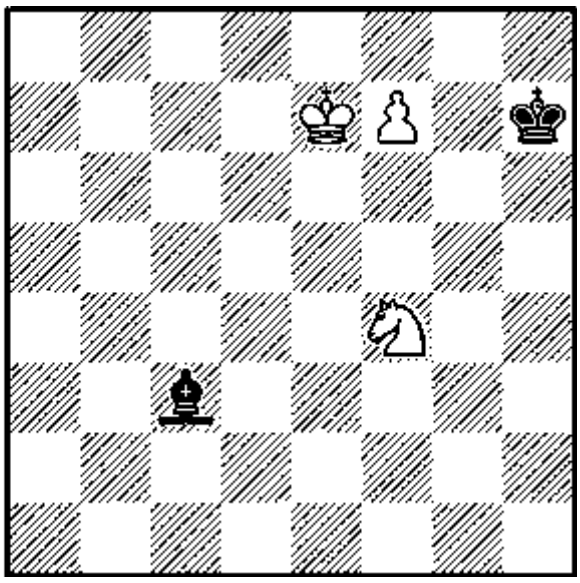
7/3
W?



White to move – what result?

7-12

7/4
W?



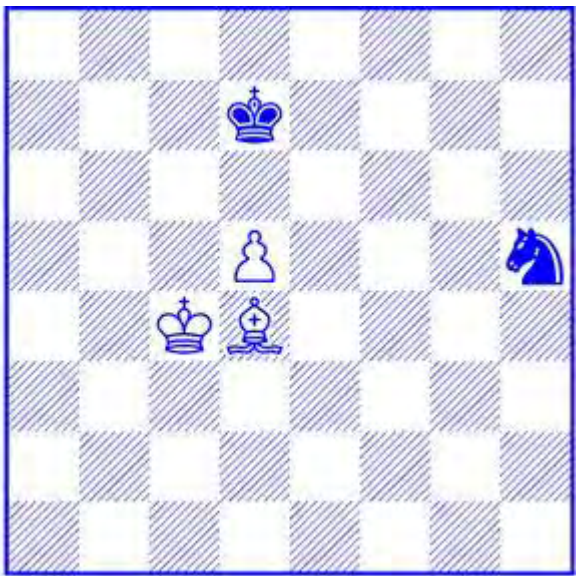
The Bishop is Superior to the Knight

Cutting the Knight Off

If the knight is on the edge of the board, the bishop can deprive it of moves.

7-13

W

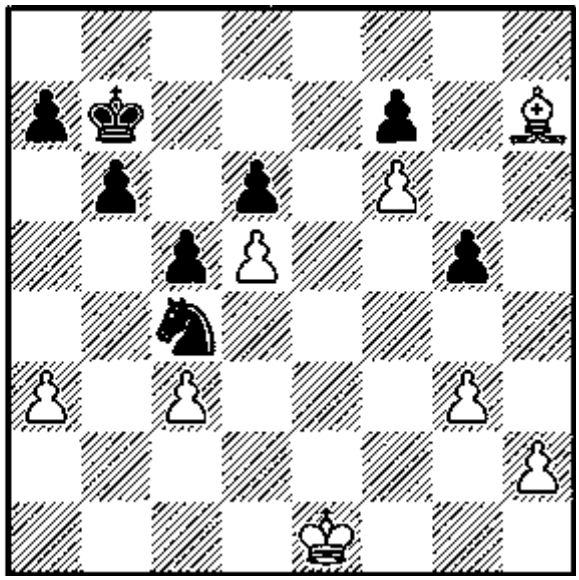


1 Be5! Ke7 2 Kc5 Kd7 3 d6 (but not 3 Kb6?? Nf6!=) **3…Ke6 4 Kc6 K×e5 5 d7**+–.

Sometimes it is not necessary to "arrest" the knight – it is enough to cut it off from the main theater of conflict (for example, from the passed pawn), as in the following example.

Goldberg – Tolush
USSR chsf, Moscow 1949

7-14



W?

1 h4! gh 2 gh Ne5 3 Bf5!

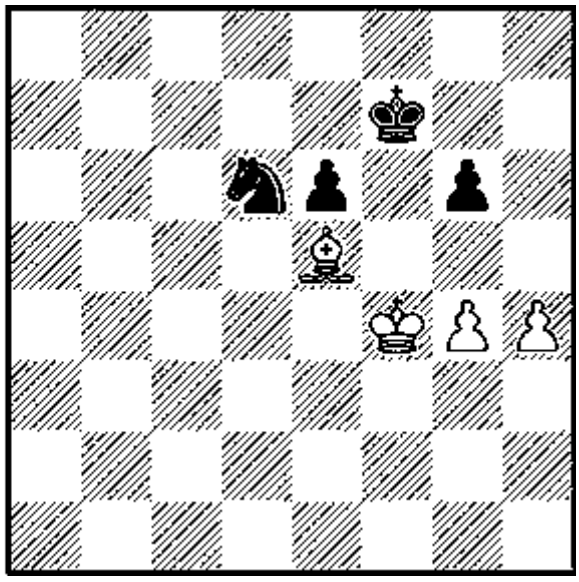
The bishop deprives the knight of the important squares g4 and d7, which it would otherwise use for the fight against the h-pawn. It is true that the knight can immediately remove this pawn – but then it comes "under arrest."

3…Nf3+ 4 Kf2 N×h4 5 Be4! Kc7 6 Kg3 Ng6 7 B×g6 fg 8 f7 Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Bykova – Volpert
USSR 1951

7-15



B

1…Ne8??

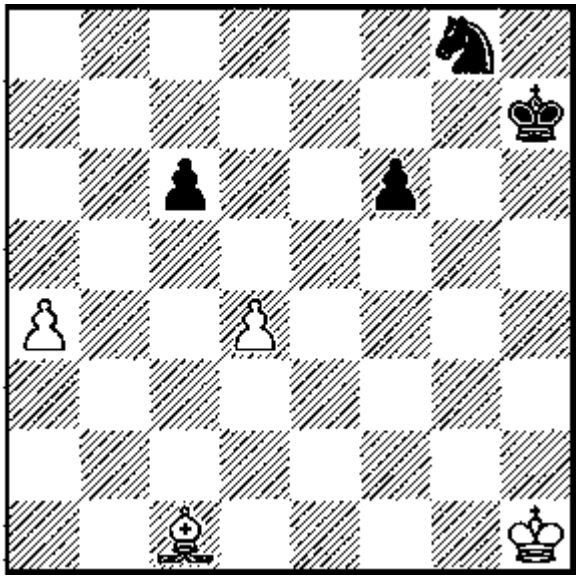
A mistake that's hard to explain. Almost any other retreat by the knight would have led to an uncomplicated draw. Now Black loses.

2 Kg5 Ng7 3 Kh6

Black resigned, in view of 3…Ne8 4 g5⊙.

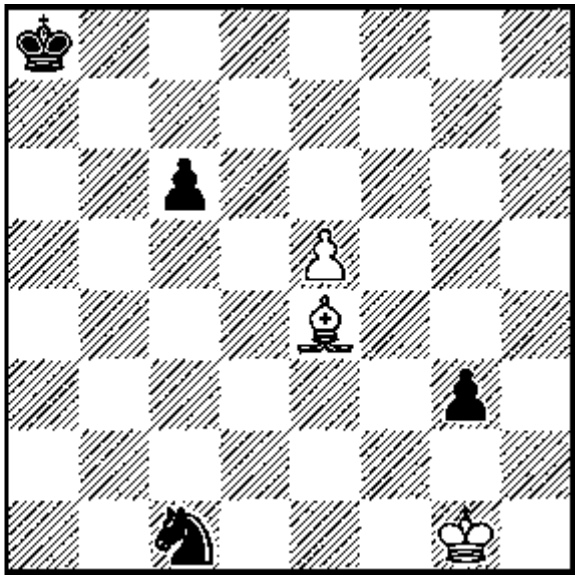
Exercises

7-16



7/5
W?

7-17



7/6
W?/Play

Fixing the Pawns

It is useful to fix the enemy pawns on squares where they may be attacked by the bishop. In this case, either the king or the knight will be tied down to their defense.

Chiburdanidze – Muresan
Lucerne ol 1982

7-18

W?

In order to make progress, White must bring her king to the queenside – but this will be met by the black king coming to d5. For example: 1 Kf2? g6! 2 Ke2 Ke6 3 Kd3 Kd5=. White also gets nothing from 2 b6 Ke6 3 Bf8 h5 4 gh gh 5 Kg2 Kd7! 6 Kh3 Nc4=.

One of the most important methods of converting one's advantage in endgames (and not just in endgames) is "the principle of two weaknesses." Sometimes it is impossible to win by working only on one part of the board. In such cases, the attacking side strives to create a second weakness in the enemy camp, or to exploit one which already exists. By attacking this second weakness, and then if necessary returning the attack to the first weakness, the attacker succeeds in breaking down and eventually overcoming the enemy's resistance.

1 h4!

An excellent positional move, stemming from the "principle of two weaknesses." The vulnerability of the h6-pawn prevents Black's king from heading towards the center; but how, then, is she to meet the advance of the enemy king to the queen's wing?

1…g6 2 h5! gh 3 gh

White's position is now won.

3…Kf6 4 b6 Nb7 5 Bf8 Kg5 6 Bg7 K×h5 7 B×e5

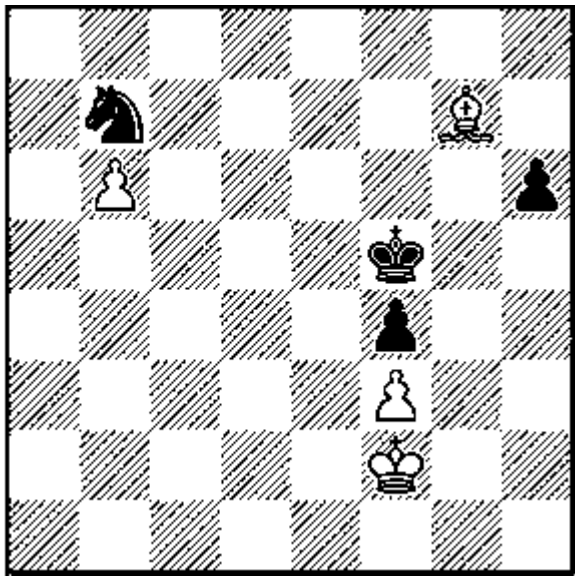
The h5-pawn is gone, but now the king must defend another vulnerable pawn – the one at f4.

7…Kg5 8 Kf2

For now, White's king cannot penetrate the kingside: 8 Kh3 Na5 9 Bd6 Nb7 10 Be7+ Kh5.

8…Kf5 9 Bg7

7-19



B

9…h5

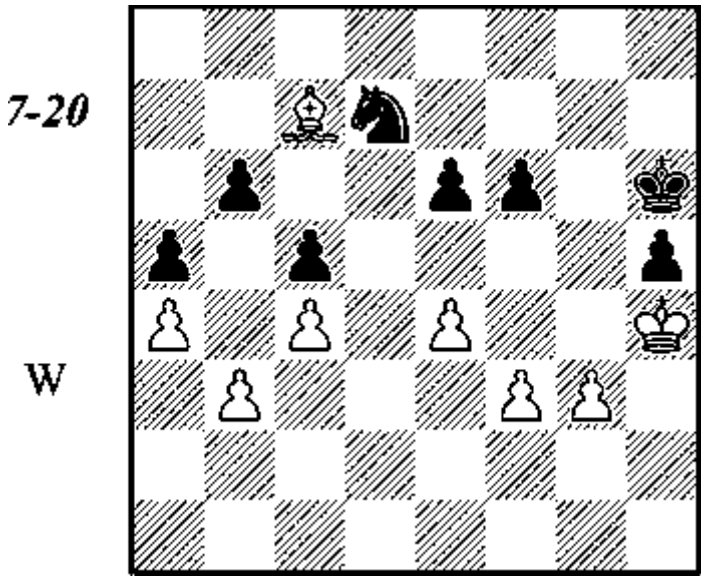
9…Kg5 is met by 10 Ke2, when the h-pawn must be advanced anyway. After h6-h5, White

changes her plan, and decides the outcome on the kingside.

10 Kg2! Nc5 11 Bf8 Nb7 12 Kh3 Kg5 13 Be7+ Kf5 14 Kh4

Black resigned, since her king cannot simultaneously defend the pawns at h5 and f4. There can be no help from her knight, either – as before, it is tied to the queenside; meanwhile, throughout this endgame, White's bishop remained very active.

Miles – Dzhindzhikhashvili
Tilburg 1978



Whereas in the preceding example Black's king was forced to defend its pawns, here this role is played by the knight. In order to let his king break into the enemy camp, White uses the standard techniques of widening the beachhead and zugzwang.

1 g4! hg 2 fg! Kg6 3 Kg3 Kg5

On 3…f5, 4 gf+ ef 5 Kf4! decides.

4 Kf3 Kh6

Nor does 4…e5 help, in view of 5 Kg3 Kg6 6 Kh4 Kh6 7 Bd8 Kg6 8 g5! fg+ (8…f5 9 ef+ K×f5 10 Kh5 e4 11 g6+–) 9 B×g5 Nb8 10 Bd8 Nd7 11 Kg4⊙+–.

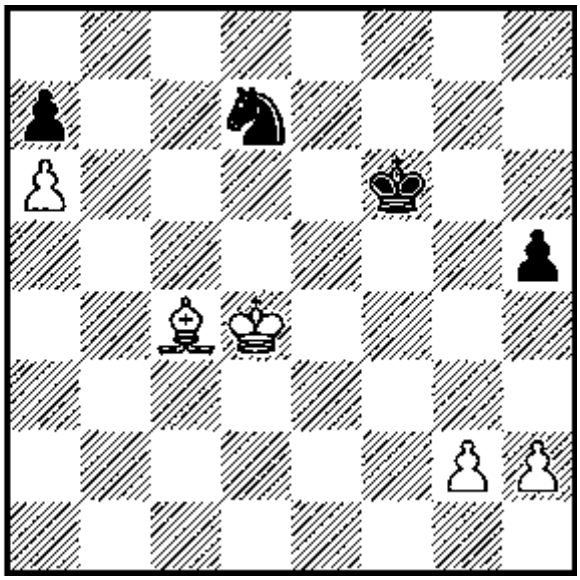
5 Kf4 Kg6 6 e5! fe+ (6…f5 7 gf+ ef 8 e6) **7 B×e5 Kf7 8 Bc7 Kf6 9 g5+ Kf7 10 Kg4 Kg6 11 Bd6**

Black resigned. He is in zugzwang, and will find himself in zugzwang over and over again, since his knight is tied to the defense of the b6-pawn, and cannot budge. For example: 11…e5 12 Bc7⊙ e4 13 Kf4 (13 Bd8) 13…e3 14 K×e3 K×g5 15 Ke4+–, or 11…Kf7 12 Kh5 Kg7 13 Bc7⊙ Kh7 (13…e5 14 Kg4+–) 14 g6+ Kg7 15 Kg5⊙+–.

Tragicomedies

Smyslov – Gurgenidze
USSR ch, Tbilisi 1966

7-21



W?

White wins, using exactly the same move (and the same technique) as in the Chiburdanidze-Muresan game: 1 h4! It is vital to fix the enemy pawn on the vulnerable h5-square, in order to tie one of Black's pieces to its defense, or in some lines to create a dangerous passed h-pawn.

In the game, White erred with **1 Kd5?** After **1…h4!**, the position became drawn. If White sends his king after the a7-pawn, Black squeezes it into the corner with …Kc7. And on g2-g3, Black exchanges pawns and easily blockades the passed g-pawn which results. Besides, he only needs to give up his knight for it, and then bring his king back to b8 (the elementary fortress already known to us) to secure the draw.

The continuation was: **2 Be2 Nf8 3 Ke4 Kg5 4 Kd5 Kf6 5 Bg4 Ng6**, and the game ended in a draw.

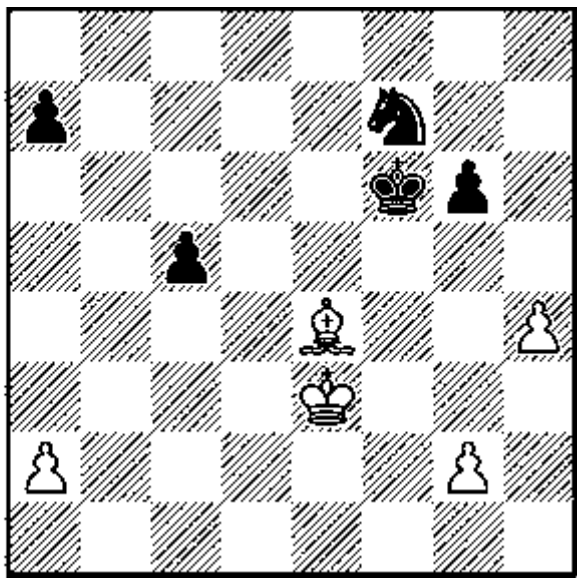
The Passed Pawn

The presence of passed pawns on the board, as a rule, favors the side with the bishop. The bishop is a wide-ranging piece, able both to support its own pawns, while simultaneously dealing with the enemy's, whereas the knight generally succeeds in acting only upon a narrow segment of the board. If it succeeds, let's say, in blockading the passed pawn on one wing, it cannot successfully involve itself in the fray on the opposite wing.

A few of the endings we have examined have already illustrated the difficulties faced by the knight when battling against a passed pawn (Goldberg-Tolush, for instance, or Chiburdanidze-Muresan). Let's analyze some more examples of this theme.

Spassky – Fischer
Santa Monica 1966

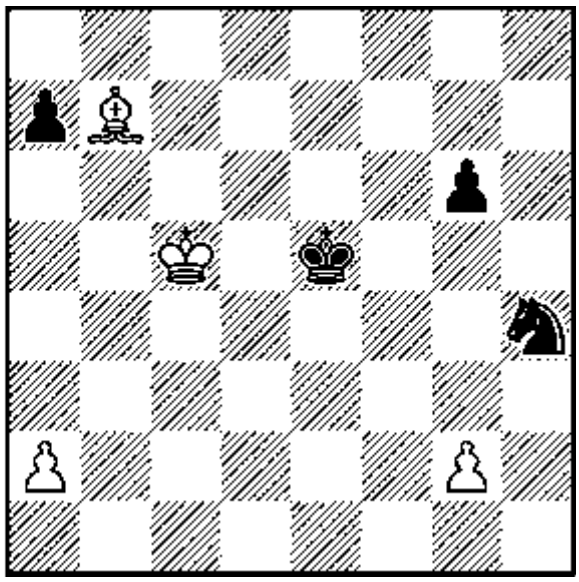
7-22



B?

White would certainly love to play g2-g4 (for instance, in reply to 1…Nd6), tying one of the enemy pieces to the kingside. Then the king would move over to the queenside, and attack Black's pawns.

The most stubborn line was Gligoric's suggestion 1…Nh6! (and if 2 Kf4, then 2…Nf7! 3 g4 g5+). Averbakh extends the line as follows: 2 Kd3 Nf5 3 Kc4 N×h4 4 K×c5 Ke5 5 Bb7



5…Kf4 6 Kb5 Kg3 7 Ka6 N×g2 8 K×a7+– (the knight is, as usual, helpless against a rook's pawn).

But instead of the desperate king march to the g2-pawn, Zviagintsev suggested the more restrained plan of 5…Nf5, which offers Black realistic saving chances, in view of the small amount of remaining material. On 6 Kb5, there follows 6…Kd6 7 Ka6 Kc5 8 K×a7 Kb4= (after the king gets to a3, the knight will be given up for the g-pawn). Or 6 a4 Ne3 7 Kb5 Kd6 8 a5 (8 Ka6 Kc5△ 9…Kb4) 8…g5 9 Be4 g4 10 Ka6 g3 11 K×a7 Kc7 12 Ka6 Nc4 13 Bf3 Ne3 14 Kb5 Kb8 15 Kc5 (15 Kb6 Nc4+) 15…Ka7 16 Kd4 N×g2=.

Fischer's choice makes things considerably easier for White, since it gives him a passed pawn without even having to exchange pawns for it.

1…g5? 2 h5 Nh6 3 Kd3 Ke5 4 Ba8 Kd6 5 Kc4 g4 6 a4

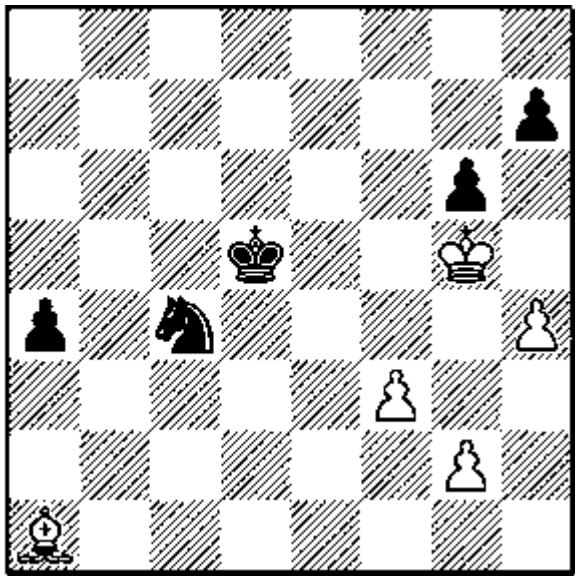
Black's king can only defend one of the two queenside pawns. Seeing that the a7-pawn is doomed, Spassky does not hurry to attack it, preferring to strengthen his position maximally first.

6…Ng8 7 a5 Nh6 8 Be4 g3 9 Kb5 Ng8 10 Bb1 Nh6 11 Ka6 Kc6 12 Ba2 Black resigned.

The following sharp endgame features an interesting, though not wholly error-free, struggle.

Perelstein – Vepkhvishvili
Pushkin Hills 1977

7-24



W

Who stands better? The black a-pawn could become very dangerous, while White will soon create a kingside passed pawn. In such sharp positions, the bishop is usually stronger than the knight, which is why Perelstein did not go in for the drawing line 1 h5 gh 2 K×h5 Ne3 3 g4 a3 4 Kh6 Nc2 5 K×h7! N×a1 6 g5 a2 7 g6=.

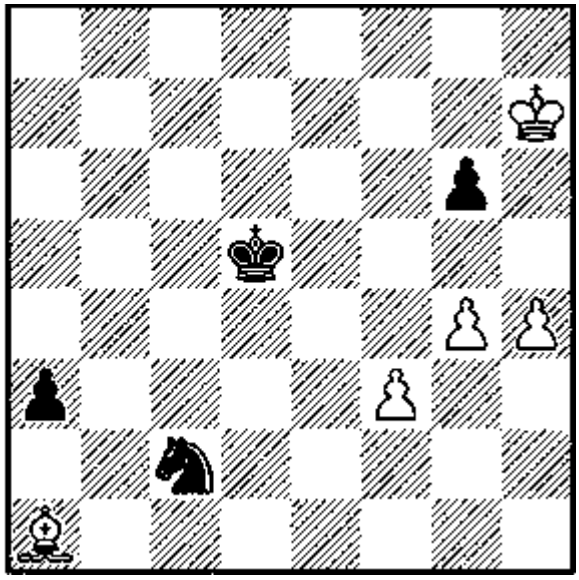
1 Kh6 Ne3 2 g4 a3?!

The accurate 2…Ng2! 3 h5 gh would have led to a draw. Black hopes for more, and does indeed achieve it – but only as a result of errors on the part of his opponent.

3 K×h7 Nc2

Already pointless is 3…Ng2 4 h5 gh 5 gh.

7-25



W?

The bishop can find no square on the long diagonal: 4 Bf6? loses to the interference move 4…Nd4, and 4 Bc3? is met by 4…Kc4. All that is left to hope for is his pawns.

The strongest move here was 4 g5!! After 4…N×a1 5 h5 a2 6 hg Nc2 7 g7 a1Q 8 g8Q+ Black loses his knight. For example: 8…Kd6 (8…Kd4? 9 Qg7+) 9 Qg6+ Ke7 10 Q×c2 Qh1+ 11 Kg7 Q×f3 12 Qc7+ Ke6 13 Qb6+ Kd7 14 Qf6, with a winning queen endgame.

In Chapter 12, which is devoted to the theory of queen endgames, you will read that in such situations the only hope for salvation lies in the black king getting as close as possible to the corner square a1. Black should therefore play 8…Kc5! 9 Qc8+ Kb4 10 Q×c2 Qh1+ 11 Kg7 Q×f3. The computer assures us that the resulting position is drawn; however, to demonstrate this evaluation right at the board is quite difficult – as a rule, the defending side errs somewhere along the way, and loses.

4 h5? gh 5 g5?

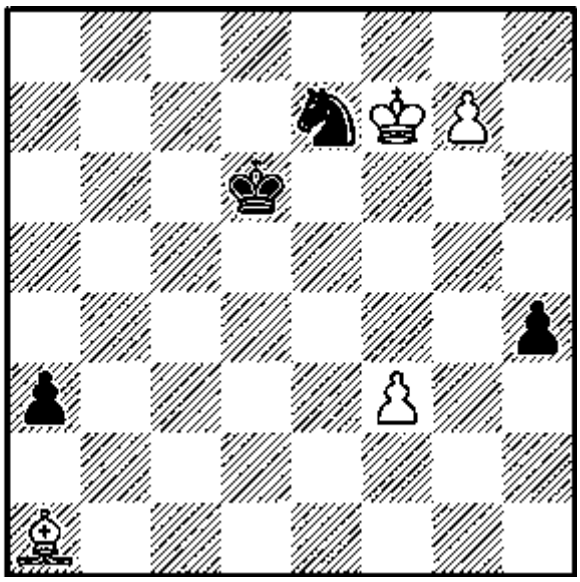
White still draws after 5 gh! N×a1 6 h6.

5…Ne3!

Now it is Black who wins. On 6 g6 Nf5, the knight will sacrifice itself for the g-pawn, and the bishop cannot stop both passed pawns (“pants”).

6 Kg6 h4 7 Kf6 Kd6! 8 g6 Nd5+ 9 Kf7 Ne7 10 g7

7-26



B

10…Nf5?!

10…h3 would have reached the goal much more simply.

11 g8N! h3 12 Nf6 h2

There was also a more elegant solution, based on the idea of a deflecting knight sacrifice: 12…Kc6! 13 Ng4 (13 Ne4 Nd6+!) 13…Nh6+! 14 N×h6 h2–+.

13 Ne4+ Kd5 14 Nf2 Nd4

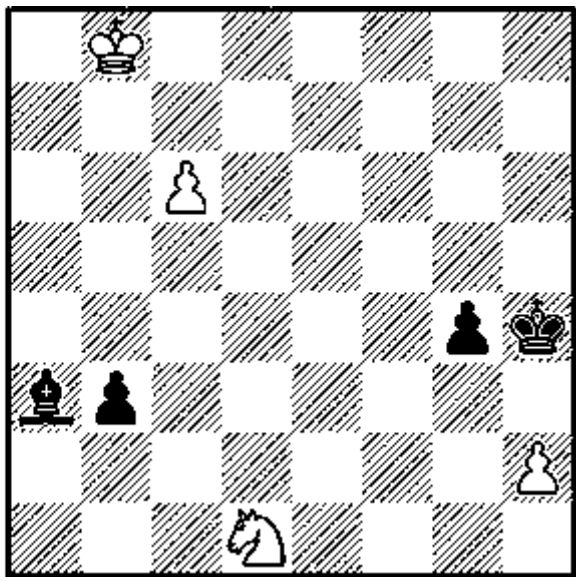
As a result of the inaccuracies committed, the knight must repeat its earlier task of attacking the bishop, and then returning to battle with the enemy passed pawns. It turns out to be just in time.

15 f4 Nc2 16 f5 (there is nothing else) **16…N×a1 17 Ke7 Nb3 18 f6 Nd4**

White resigned, in view of 19 f7 Ne6 (analysis by Dvoretsky).

Exercises

7-27



7/7
W?

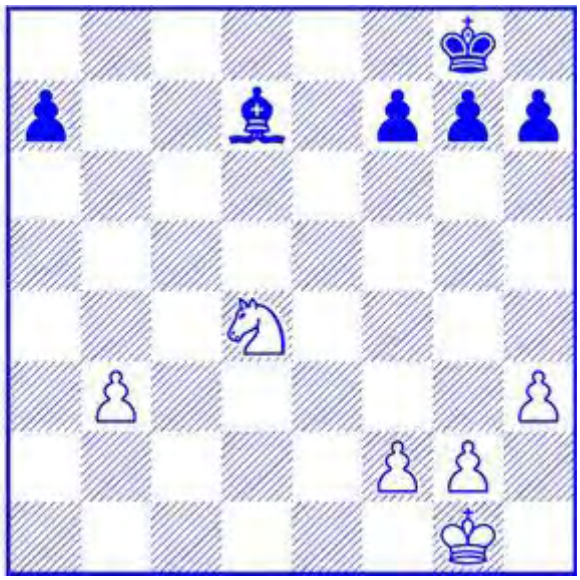
Can White save himself?

An Open Position, A More Active King

The classic example of the exploitation of this type of advantage is the following endgame.

Stoltz – Kashdan
The Hague ol 1928

7-28



B

The position seems about equal, but it is not: Black has a significant advantage in fact. First, because his king succeeds in occupying the d5-square, and will therefore stand better than its opposite number. And second, because the position is open, the bishop is stronger than the knight (although you would not say so, at first glance).

1…Kf8 2 Kf1 Ke7 3 Ke2 Kd6 4 Kd3 Kd5 5 h4 Bc8!

After the bishop check at a6, the black king goes in the opposite direction to the one White's king retreats to.

7-29

W

6 Nf3?!

6 f3 Ba6+ 7 Ke3 Kc5 8 Nc2 should have been preferred. Here is Averbakh's suggested continuation: 8…Bf1 9 g3 Ba6 10 Nd4 Bb7 (10…Kb4 11 Nc6+) 11 Kd3 Kb4 12 Kc2 Bd5 13 Kb2 g6 14 Kc2 a6 15 Kb2, and it is still not clear how Black will break down his opponent's resistance.

6…Ba6+ 7 Kc3

On 7 Ke3 Kc5 8 Ng5 Kb4 9 N×f7 K×b3, the a-pawn decides.

7…h6 8 Nd4 g6 9 Nc2?!

9 f3 is stronger, taking the important e4-square under control.

9…Ke4! 10 Ne3 f5

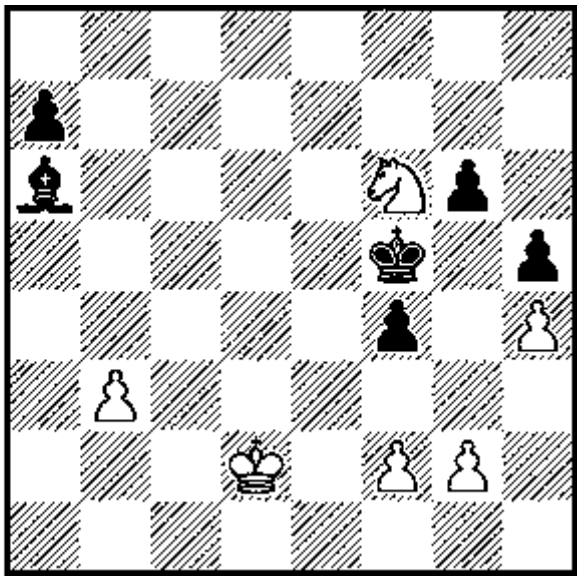
Black has deployed his king to maximum effect. He intends to drive the knight from e3, and then to attack the g2-pawn with his bishop.

11 Kd2 f4 12 Ng4

Also hopeless is 12 Nc2 Bf1! 13 Ne1 Kf5 (△ 14…Kg4) 14 f3 g5 15 hg K×g5!, and the king reaches g3.

12…h5 13 Nf6+ Kf5

7-30



W

14 Nd7?

Once again Stoltz fails to show defensive grit. As Müller and Lamprecht indicate, Black's task would have been considerably more difficult after 14 Nh7! Kg4 (14…Bf1 15 f3, and if 15…B×g2, then 16 Ke2) 15 Nf8 K×h4 16 N×g6+ Kg5 17 Ne5 Kf5 18 Nf3 (the pawn endgame after 18 Nd3 B×d3 19 K×d3 Kg4 20 Ke2 h4! 21 b4 a6 22 Kf1 Kf5 23 Ke1 Ke5! is lost) 18…Bb7 19 Ke2.

14…Bc8!

Excellent technique. On 15 Nc5 Kg4 decides; however, the text is no improvement.

15 Nf8 g5! 16 g3

Forced: after 16 hg K×g5 the knight is lost.

16…gh 17 gh Kg4 18 Ng6 Bf5 19 Ne7 Be6 20 b4 K×h4 21 Kd3 Kg4 22 Ke4 h4 23 Nc6 Bf5+ 24 Kd5 f3!

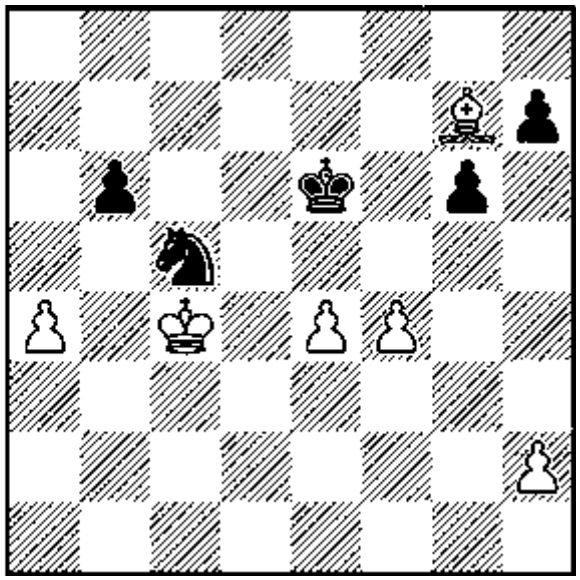
Of course not 24…h3? 25 Ne5+ and 26 Nf3.

25 b5 h3 26 N×a7 h2 27 b6 h1Q 28 Nc6 Qb1 29 Kc5 Be4 White resigned.

Karpov – A. Sokolov

Linares cmf(2) 1987

7-31



B?

Which pawn should Black take? ***In principle, when you have a knight against a bishop, the task is made easier, the narrower the battlefield: all the pawns should be on the same side.***

From this point of view, the logical move is 1…N×a4! And in fact, this would have led to a draw: 2 Bd4 Kd6 3 Kb5 (3 e5+ Ke6 4 h4 h6 5 Kb5 Nc5 6 B×c5 bc 7 K×c5 g5=; 3 Kb4 Nc5 4 B×c5+ bc+ 5 Kb5 g5=) 3…Nc5 4 B×c5+ bc (△ 5…g5) 5 h4 h6 6 Kc4 Kc6 7 e5 h5⊙=.

1…N×e4? 2 Kb5 Nc5 3 Bf8!

Sokolov probably counted on 3 Bd4? N×a4! 4 K×a4 Kf5 5 Be3 Kg4 6 Kb5 Kh3=.

3…Nd7

Now 3…N×a4 4 K×a4 Kf5 5 Bd6+– no longer helps.

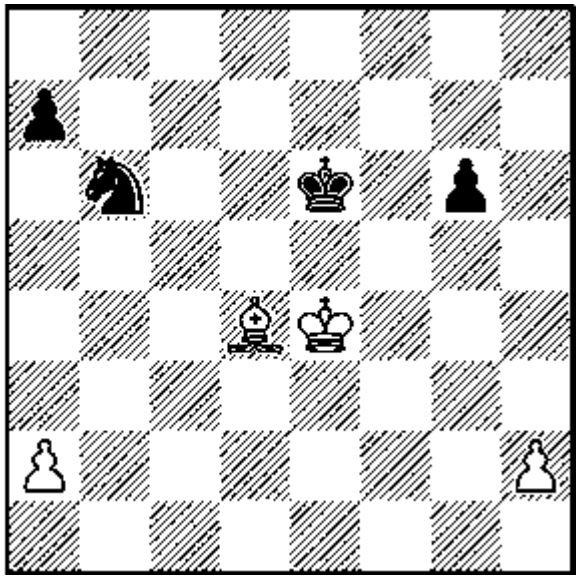
4 Ba3 Kd5 5 Be7 Kd4 6 Bd8 Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Krnic – Flear

Wijk aan Zee 1988

7-32



W

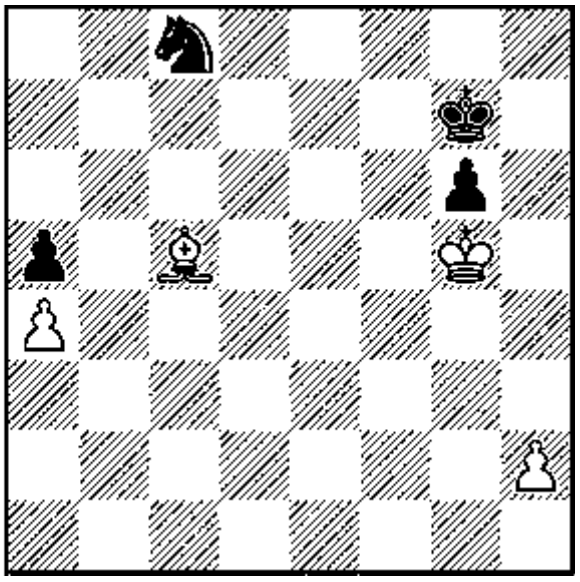
A draw was agreed here. Krnic probably just did not realize that the bishop is completely dominating the knight and he would therefore have every reason to expect a win.

1 Kf4 Nc8 (1…Kf7 2 Ke5 or 2 B×b6 ab 3 Ke5 Ke7 4 a4) **2 Kg5 Kf7 3 a4! a5!?**

White has a much simpler task after 3…Nb6 4 a5 or 3…a6 4 Bc5 Kg7 5 a5.

4 Bc5 (cutting the knight off) **4…Kg7**

7-33



W?

5 h3!

"Steinitz's Rule" in action! On 5 h4? Kf7 6 Kh6 Kf6, it is White who falls into zugzwang.

5…Kf7 6 Kh6 Kf6 7 h4⊙ (White takes the opposition, in order to follow up with an

outflanking) **7…Kf5** (7…Kf7 8 Kh7 Kf6 9 Kg8+–) **8 Kg7 Kg4** (8…g5 9 h5) **9 Kf6!**

On 9 K×g6? K×h4 the black king would get back to the queenside in time: 10 Kf5 Kg3 11 Ke6 Kf4 12 Kd7 Ke5 13 K×c8 Kd5 14 Bb6 Kc4=.

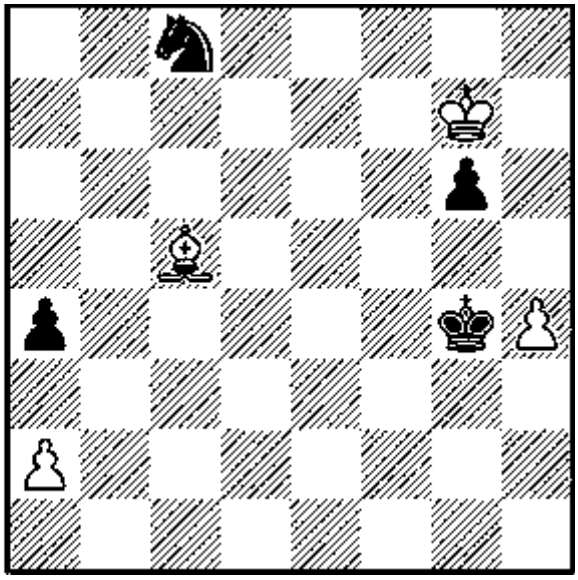
9…K×h4 10 Ke6 Kg4 11 Kd7 Kf5 12 K×c8 Ke6 13 Kc7 Kd5 14 Kb6+–

It is odd that Flear recommends 3 Kh6 (instead of 3 a4). The GM even awards this move an exclamation mark, although in point of fact it deserves a question mark, and according to analysis by Zviagintsev and Dvoretsky, it probably lets the win slip.

3 Kh6? a5! (Flear examines only the weaker 3…Nb6 and 3…a6) 4 Bc5 (4 a4 Nd6 5 Kg5 Nc4) 4…a4! 5 h3 (5 Kh7 Kf6 6 Kg8 g5 is no better) 5…Kf6 6 h4⊙ Kf5 7 Kg7 Kg4

7-34

W

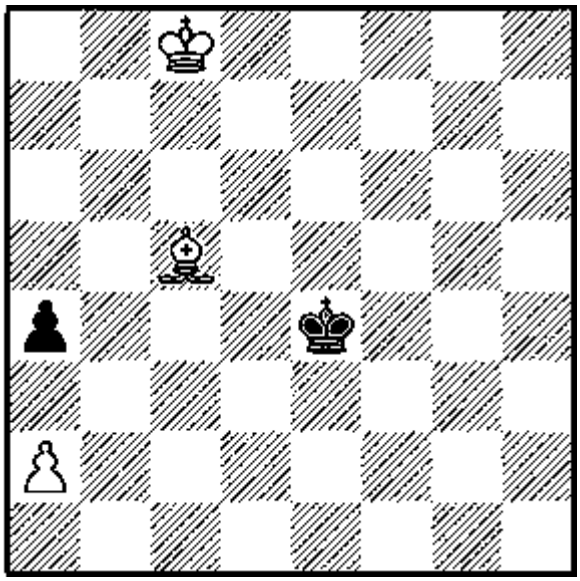


In order to understand what follows, we must recall the conclusions we reached when studying Rauzer's positions with bishop and pawn vs. bishop (Diagrams 4-2 and 4-4). After 8 Kf6 K×h4 9 Ke6 Kg4 10 Kd7 Kf5 11 K×c8 Ke6, Black has no trouble drawing with the white pawn on a3. Here, the pawn is on a2, which would give White a win (although a rather complicated one), if there were not a black g-pawn on the board. That of course changes the evaluation.

8 K×g6 K×h4 9 Kf5 Kg3! 10 Ke6 Kf4 11 Kd7 Ke4 12 K×c8

7-35

B?



Does White not win now? Not necessarily – not if his opponent can force the move a2-a3 and then get back with his king.

12…Kd3! 13 Kd7 Kc2 (threatening 14…a3!=) 14 a3 Kd3 15 Ke6 Ke4!

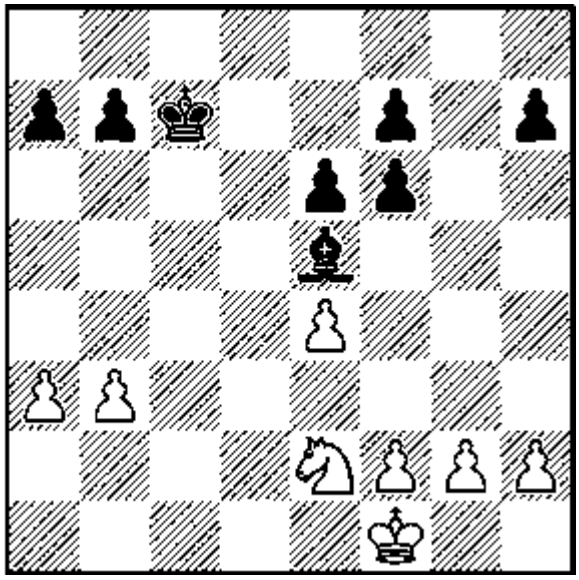
It turns out White cannot prevent the black king from reaching the drawing zone. For example, on 16 Be7, Black can play either 16…Kf4 17 Bf6 Kg4! (17…Ke4? is a mistake, in view of 18 Be5! with a theoretically won position) 18 Ke5 Kh5 19 Kf5 Kh6 20 Be5 Kh7!= (but not 20…Kh5?

21 Bg7+–), or 16…Kd4 17 Bd6 Kc4! (17…Ke4? 18 Be5+– or 18 Bh2+– would be a mistake).

Exercises

7-36

7/8
B?



Defensive Methods with a Knight against a Bishop

Sometimes, an inferior position may be saved by tactical mean – using ***knight forks***. But strategic methods are also often used. Let's enumerate the most important ones:

Blockading the passed pawns;

Fixing the enemy pawns on the same color squares as his bishop;

Erecting a barrier – the knight and pawns take control of a complex of important squares, preventing the incursion of the enemy king or at least making that incursion much more difficult;

Erecting a fortress.

These techniques are not usually employed singly, but in combination with each other. How this plays out, we shall see in the examples in this section.

Pirrot – Yusupov
Germany tt 1992

7-37

B

1…B×a2 2 Kf2 △ Ke3 would lead to a roughly equal position. Yusupov finds the best practical chance.

1…f5! 2 Nc3?

His opponent gets greedy: by maintaining the balance of material, he loses the game. 2 Nd2! was necessary (blockading the passed pawn) 2…B×a2 3 f4 (fixing the enemy pawn on the same

color square as the bishop; on the other hand, 3 Kf2 f4 4 Ne4 Ke7 5 Ke1 or 5 g3 was good, too) 3…Ke7 4 Kf2 Bd5 6 g3 Kd6 6 Ke3 Be4 7 Kd4, and there appears to be no way to break into the fortress White has constructed.

2…d2 (threatening 3…Be2) **3 Kf2 f4!**

White's position has become hopeless, since his king is cut off forever from the passed pawn.

4 b3 ab 5 ab Bd3 6 g3 g5 7 h4 h6!

There is no need to calculate the variation 7…fg+ 8 K×g3 gh+ 9 K×h4 Be2, since the text provides a much simpler resolution.

8 hg hg 9 gf gf

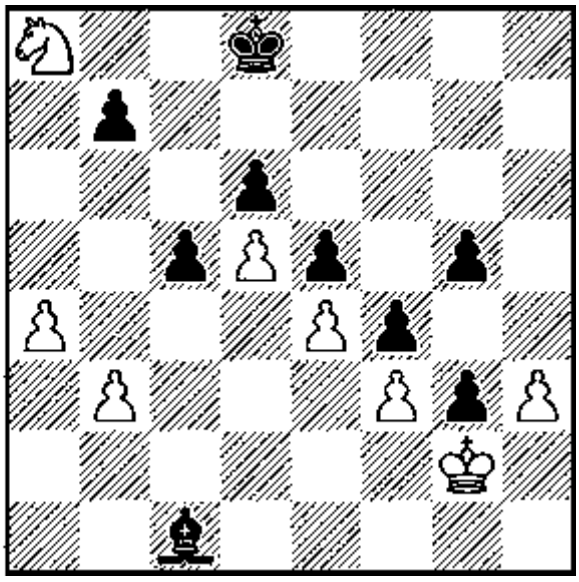
White resigned, in view of 10 Nd1 (10 Kg2 Be2 11 Kh3 B×f3–+) 10…Ke7 11 Nb2 Kd6 12 Nd1 Kc5 13 Nb2 Kb5 14 Nd1 Kb4–+.

Nebylitsyn – Galuzin

USSR 1969

7-38

B?



White's king is tied forever to the king's wing. The evaluation of this position hinges on whether the knight and pawns can erect an uncrossable barrier in the path of the enemy king.

1…c4?

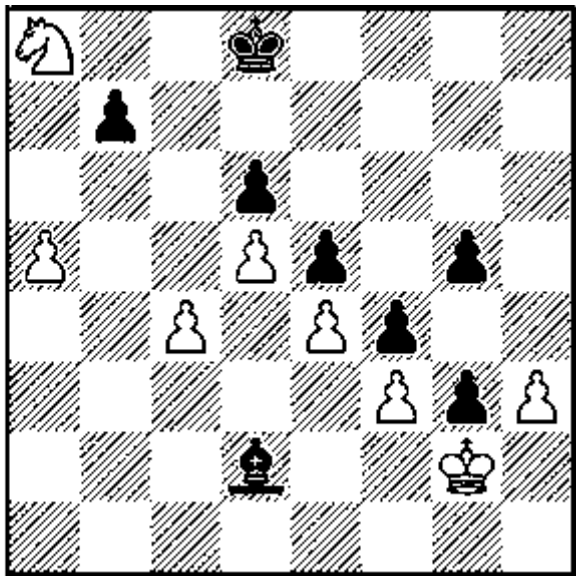
A tempting, but incorrect pawn sacrifice. Black's goal is achieved by 1…Bd2! 2 Nb6 Ba5 3 Nc4 Bc7, when there appears to be nothing that can stop the transfer of the king to a6, followed by …b7-b5. If 4 Na3, then 4…Kc8 5 Nb5 Bb8, followed by …b7-b6 and …Kb7-a6-a5.

2 bc Be3 3 a5 Bd2

Or 3…Kc8 4 Nb6+ Kc7 5 Na8+ Kb8 6 Nb6 Bd2 (6…Ka7 7 Nc8+ Ka6 8 N×d6; 6…Bc5 7 Nd7+ Ka7 8 N×c5 dc 9 Kg1= Ka6?? 10 d6+–) 7 a6, and we are back in the game continuation.

7-39

W?



4 a6!!

After 4 Nb6? B×a5 5 Na4 b6 (intending …Kc7-b7-a6) 6 Nb2 Kc7 7 Nd3 Bd2! (it is important to prevent the maneuver Nc1-b3), White loses.

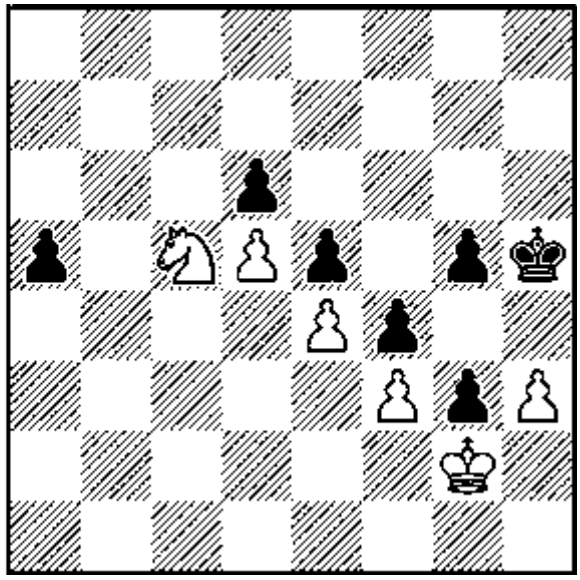
4…ba (4…Kc8?? 5 a7 Be3 6 Nb6+) **5 Nb6 Be3 6 Na4 Bd4 7 Kf1 Ke7**

The queenside barrier is erected, and the king can no longer penetrate here. Black therefore tries his last chance: marching his king to h4, in an attempt to place his opponent in zugzwang. True, White will then play the c4-c5 break; but then Black can sacrifice his bishop and return his king to the queenside.

8 Kg2 Kf6 9 Kf1 Kg6 10 Kg2 Kh5 11 Kf1 Kh4 12 Kg2 a5 13 c5! B×c5 14 N×c5 Kh5

7-40

W



Here 15 Nb7? a4 16 N×d6 a3–+ would be a mistake. White must set up a fresh barrier.

15 Na4 Kg6 16 Nc3 Kg7 17 Kf1 Kf8 18 Kg2 Ke7 19 Nb5! a4 20 Kf1 Kd8 21 Kg2

Draw, since Black's king can advance no further.

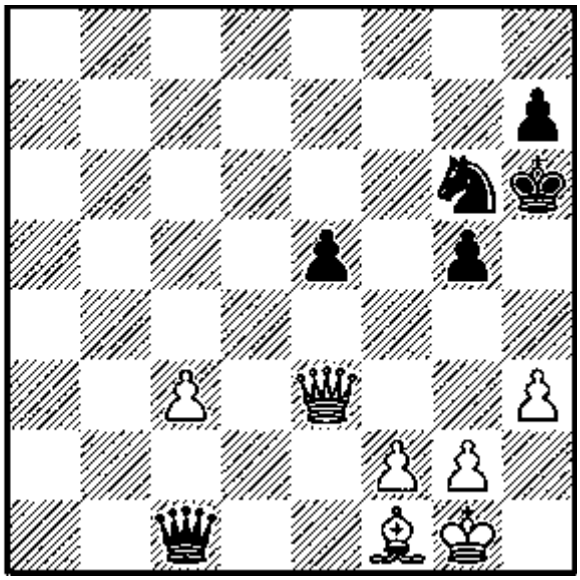
Tragicomedies

Balashov – Smyslov

Tilburg 1977

7-41

B?



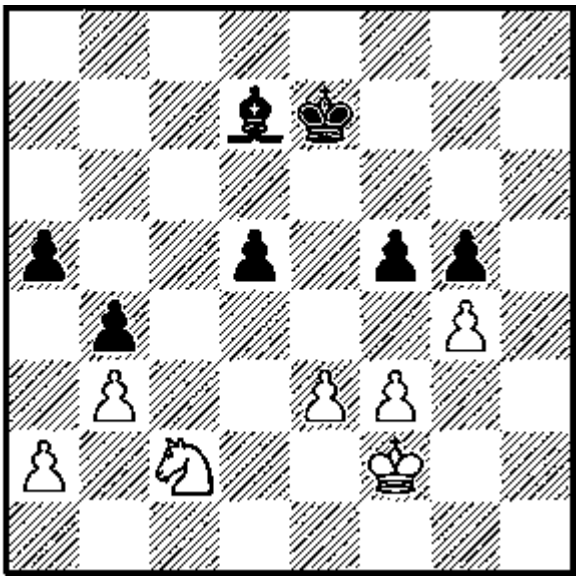
The game continuation was: **1…Qa1?? 2 g3** (△ 3 h4), and White won easily.

Black draws after 1…Q×e3! 2 fe Nf8!. The knight moves inexorably to c5, from where it deprives the enemy king of the important squares d3 and e4 (barrier); after this, Black plays …Kg7-f6 and …h7-h6. 3 Kf2 Nd7 4 Kf3 Nc5 5 Kg4 Kg6 is not dangerous, since there can be no bishop check from d3. If White's king heads for the b-file, Black defends the knight with his king from d6.

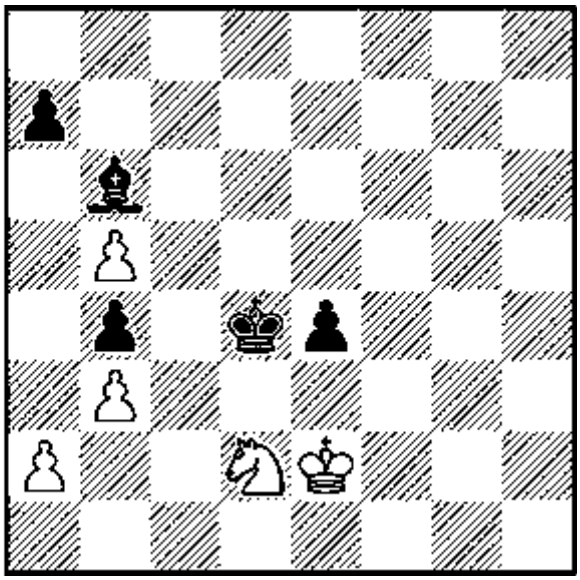
Exercises

7-42

7/9
W?



7-43



7/10
W?

The Knight is Superior to the Bishop

Domination and Knight Forks

Nepomniaschy – Polovodin
Leningrad ch 1988

7-44

B?

1…Nc3!

The key to the position is that on 2 a3 Ne2!! decides: 3 ab (3 K×e2 ba) 3…Nf4+. Without this little combination, based upon a knight fork, there would be no win (with the bishop at f3, let's say, the position is drawn).

2 Bf3 N×a2 3 Bd1 b3!

Once again, Black has recourse to a fork, in order to advance his passed pawn (4 B×b3 Nc1+ 5 Kc3 N×b3 6 K×b3 Kb5⊙ loses at once). On the other hand, 3…Kb5 4 Bc2 Nc1+ 5 Kd2 b3 is strong, too.

4 Kd2 b2 5 Bc2 (5 Kc2 Nc3) **5…Nb4 6 Bb1 Kb6!**

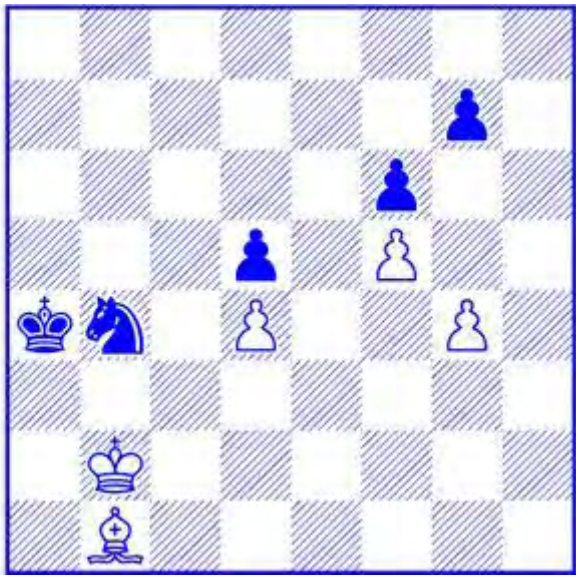
An outstanding loss of tempo! The straightforward 6…Kb5? 7 Kc3⊙ Nc6 (7…Ka4 8 K×b2=) 8 Ba2 Ne7 9 Kb3 leads to a draw.

7 Kc3 Kb5⊙ 8 Kb3 (8 K×b2 Kc4–+) **8…Nc6 9 Kc3**

9 Bd3+ Ka5 10 K×b2 Kb4–+ is no better.

9…Ka4 10 K×b2 (10 Ba2 Ka3) **10…Nb4!⊙** (but not 10…N×d4? 11 Ba2)

7-45



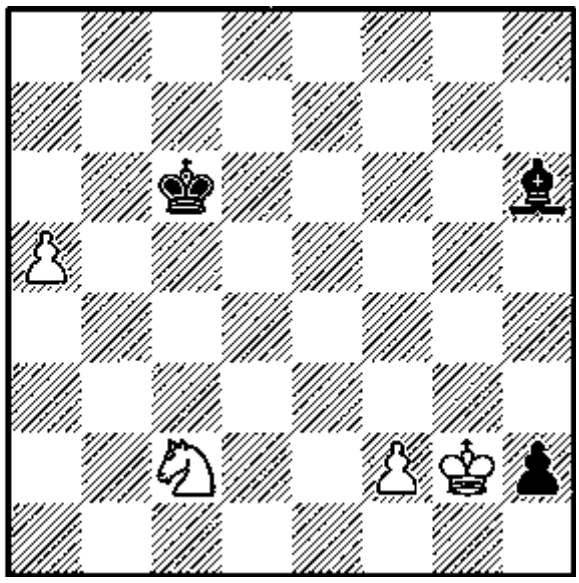
W

A picturesque domination of the knight over the bishop! Note that the knight takes away only three of the bishop's squares. Another is controlled by the d5-pawn (the pawns' placement on the squares of the same color as the opposing bishop is one of the means of restricting its mobility). But the chief blame for White's helplessness lies with his own kingside pawns, placed on squares the same color as his bishop, and turning it "bad."

11 Kc3 Ka3⊙ White resigned.

R. Réti, 1922

7-46



W?

1 Nd4+! Kc5

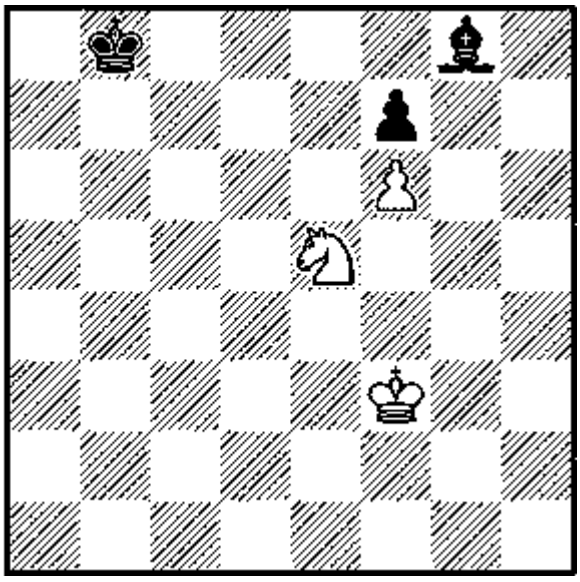
On 1…Kb7 2 K×h2 Ka6 3 Nb3 Bf4+ 4 Kh3 Kb5 5 Kg4 Bb8 6 f4 Kb4 7 f5 (7 Nd4? B×f4) 7…K×b3 8 f6 Kb4 9 f7 Bd6 10 a6+– (pants) is decisive. In this line, Black needs just one tempo; therefore, with the king already at c5, this line would not work: 2 Nb3+? Kb5 3 K×h2 Bf4+ 4 Kh3 Bb8 5 Kg4 Kb4=, or 2 K×h2? Bf4+ 3 Kh3 K×d4 4 a6 Bb8=.

2 Kh1!!⊙+–

There is not one square for the bishop where it would not be vulnerable to a knight fork.

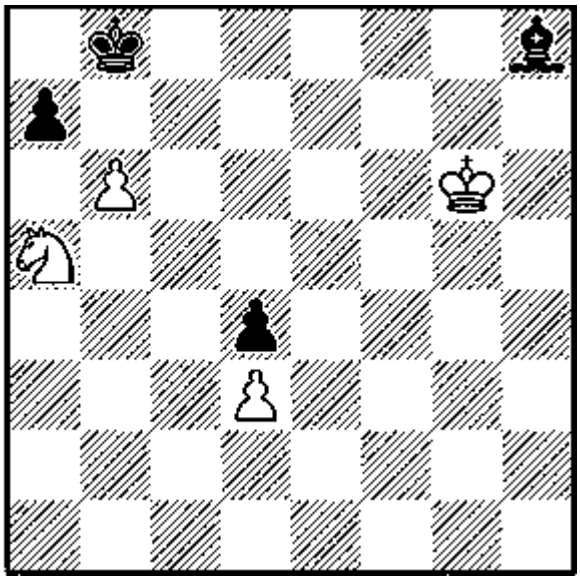
Exercises

7-47



7/11
W?

7-48



7/12
W?

Fixing the Pawns

We have already pointed out more than once how important it is to fix the enemy pawns on the same color squares as his bishop. Thus, we limit ourselves here to looking at two new examples.

Osnos – Bukhman
Leningrad ch tt 1968

7-49

W

The advantage, of course, is White's, since all his opponent's pawns are isolated and weak. But

this might not have been enough to win, had White not found the following maneuver, forcing the d-pawn to advance onto a square the same color as his bishop.

1 Nd5 Kg7 2 Nb6! Bb3 3 Nc8! d5 4 Ne7 h5 5 h4!

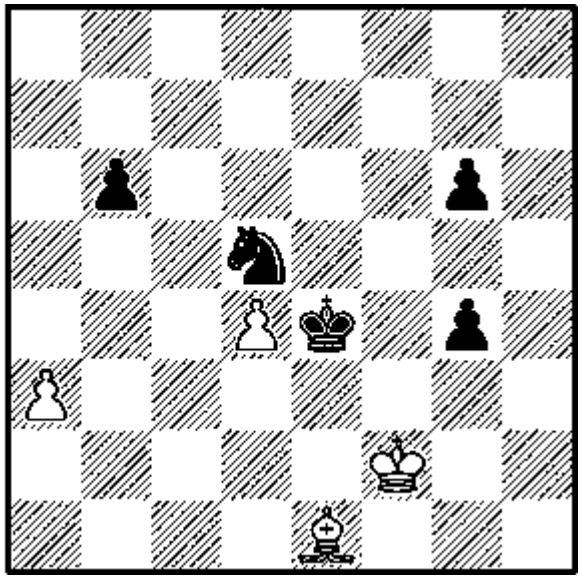
One more pawn fixed on a light square.

5…Kf8 6 Nf5 Bc2 7 Ne3 Bb3 8 Kh2 Ke7 9 Nf5+ Ke6?? (a terrible blunder in a hopeless position) **10 Nd4+** Black resigned.

Exercises

7-50

7/13
B?



Closed Position, Bad Bishop

In positions with pawn chains, the bishop has limited mobility, and therefore is sometimes weaker than the knight. The chief reason for a bishop being “bad” is that its own pawns are fixed on the same color squares as the bishop.

Zubarev – Alexandrov
Moscow 1915

7-51

W

The exploitation of the knight’s indisputable advantage over the bishop is uncomplicated, but quite instructive. First and foremost, ***the king must be made as active as possible,*** and there is an open road for him straight to c5.

1 Kf2 Ke7

On 1…Kf7, White neutralizes his opponent’s activity on the kingside by erecting a ***barrier***: 2 Ke2! Kg6 3 Ne3! Kg5 4 g3!, after which the king continues its march to c5.

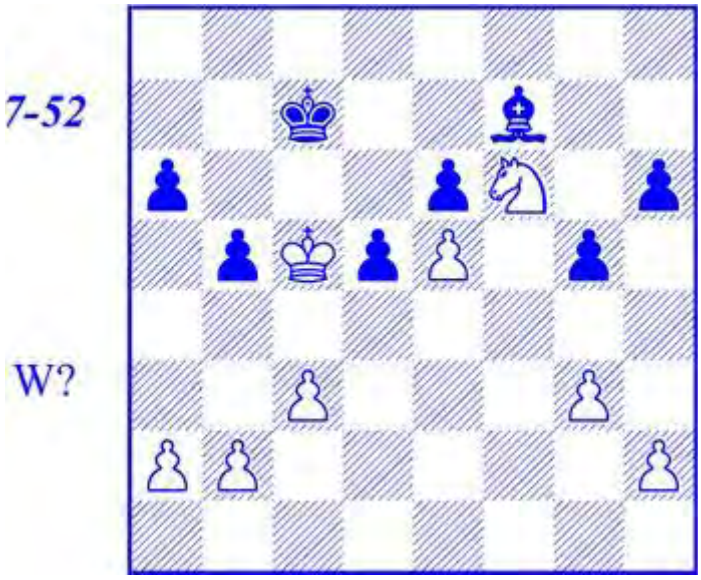
2 Ke3 Kd8 3 Kd4 Kc7 4 Kc5 Bc8

The next phase flows from the two-weaknesses principle. White cannot yet win on the queenside alone; therefore he sends the knight (via f4) to the kingside, to harry the enemy pawns. These in turn will have to be advanced, which will make them much weaker than they are in their initial positions.

5 Nb4 Bb7 6 g3

It is useful to deprive the opponent of tactical chances (such as …d5-d4).

6…Bc8 7 Nd3 Bd7 8 Nf4 (△ 9 Nh5) **8…g6 9 Nh3!** (△ 10 Ng5) **9…h6 10 Nf4 g5 11 Nh5 Be8 12 Nf6 Bf7**



13 Ng4!

One more black pawn must now be moved to the same color square as its bishop.

13…h5 14 Ne3 Bg6 (14…h4 15 gh gh 16 Ng2; 14…g4 15 Ng2 and 16 Nf4) **15 h4!**

Fixing the pawns!

15…gh 16 gh (△ Ng2-f4) **16…Be4 17 Nf1 Bf3 18 Nd2 Be2 19 Nb3 Bg4 20 Nd4**⊙

The concluding phase of White's plan is to create a zugzwang position. For this the knight needs to be brought to f4, tying the bishop to the defense of two pawns at once.

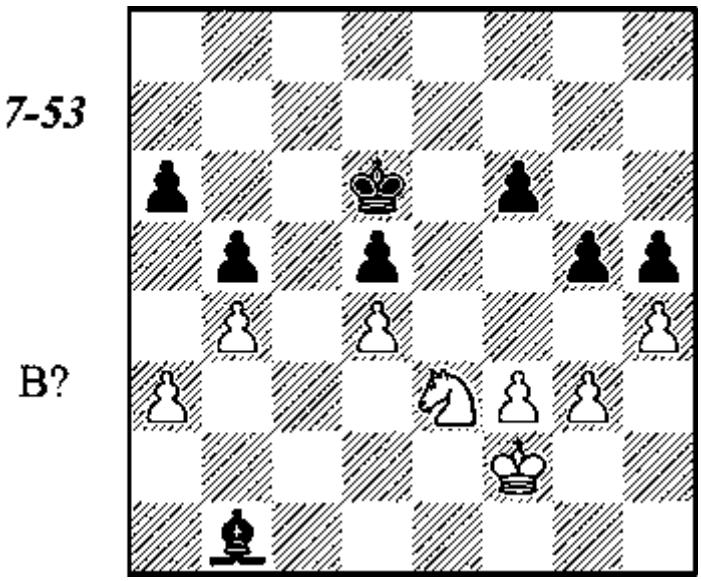
20…Bh3 21 Ne2 Bf5 22 Nf4 Bg4 23 b4⊙

The end is achieved!

23…Kd7 24 Kb6 Bf3 25 K×a6 Kc6 26 N×e6 Black resigned.

Karpov – Kasparov

Moscow wm (9) 1984/85



White's task here is considerably more complicated. For the time being, the king has no route into the enemy camp; he must continue by ***"widening the beachhead."*** The interfering kingside pawns can be removed in two ways: by g3-g4, or by exchanging on g5, followed by f3-f4.

The best defense was 1…Ke6!. On 2 hg fg 3 f4, Black can draw either by 3…gf 4 gf Bg6, or by 3…g4!?. And after 2 g4 hg 3 hg, as John Nunn points out, Black must play 3…gf! (3…fg 4 N×g4, followed by Kg3 and f3-f4, would be weaker) 4 K×f3 (4 gf Be4) 4…fg 5 Kg4 Kf6 6 N×d5+ Kg6=. White keeps more practical chances by refraining from 3 hg in favor of 3 N×g4!? gh 4 Kg2. And 2 Kg2!? gh 3 g4! is also worth looking into.

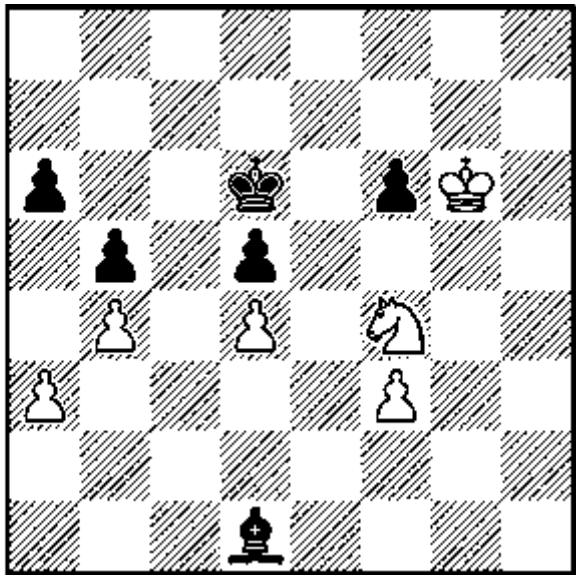
1…gh?!

After home analysis, Kasparov decided to alter the pawn structure, judging (correctly) that after 2 gh Bg6 White could no longer break through. Alas, neither he nor his trainers could foresee White's tremendous retort, securing his king a road into the enemy camp.

2 Ng2!! hg+ (2…h3 3 Nf4) **3 K×g3 Ke6 4 Nf4+ Kf5 5 N×h5** (threatening Ng7-e8-c7) **5…Ke6 6 Nf4+ Kd6 7 Kg4 Bc2 8 Kh5 Bd1 9 Kg6**

7-54

B?



9…Ke7!

9…B×f3 10 K×f6 is absolutely hopeless. In such situations, we employ the ***steady driving off of the enemy king***: the knight goes to f5, and after the king's forced retreat (since the pawn endgame is lost), White's king goes to e5 or e7. Then the knight gives check again, etc.

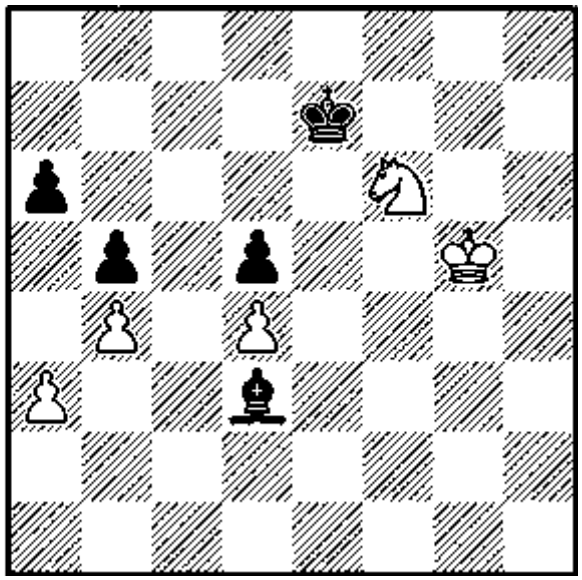
10 N×d5+?

Unjustified greed – now Black gets the chance to activate his king, via the newly-opened d5-square.

10 Nh5! B×f3 11 N×f6 was far stronger, for instance: 11…Ke6? 12 Ne8 (△ 13 Nc7+) 12…Kd7 (12…Be4+ 13 Kg5 Kd7 14 Nf6+ Ke6 15 N×e4 de 16 Kf4 Kd5 17 Ke3⊙+–) 13 Ng7 Ke7 (otherwise 14 Kf6) 14 Kf5, and White wins.

The best defense would be: 11…Be4+! 12 Kg5 Bd3!.

7-55



W?

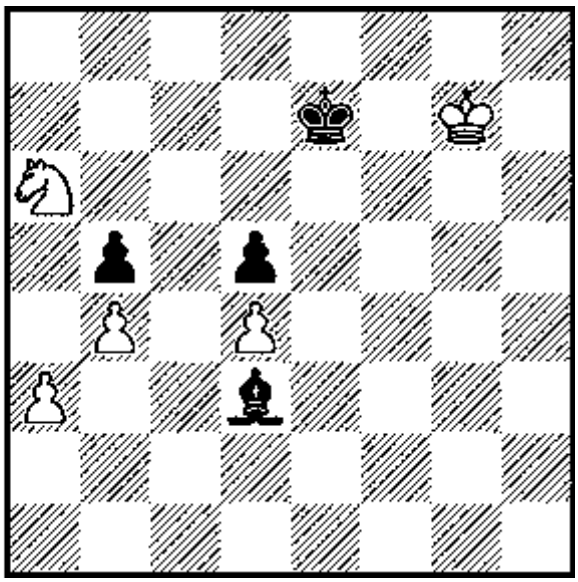
White cannot gain control of the f6- or e5-squares with his king. Capturing the pawn is also unconvincing: 13 N×d5+ Kd6 14 Nc3 (14 Ne3 or 14 Nf4 does not change anything) 14…Bf1! 15 Kf4 Bg2 16 Ke3 (intending Ne4-c5) 16…Bh3! 17 Ne4+ Kd5 18 Nc5 Bc8 19 Kd3 Bf5+ 20 Kc3 Bc8, and Black is apparently out of danger.

I thought that the variations I had found were sufficient to demonstrate that the position was drawn. However, grandmaster Mihail Marin suggested an extremely dangerous plan: 13 Ng4! with the idea of continuing Ne5-c6-b8.

I attempted to hold the line by 13…Bf1! 14 Ne5 Bh3, and now 15 Nc6+ Kd6 16 Na5 (16 Nb8?? Bc8 and 17…Kc7) 16…Ke7! 17 Nb3 Kf7 18 Nc5 Bc8 is useless, while winning the d-pawn by 15 Ng6+ Kf7! 16 Nf4 Bc8 17 N×d5 Ke6 would lead to the drawn position we already know. But Marin showed that White could play for zugzwang: 15 Kg6! Ke6!? 16 Nc6 Kd6 (16…Bf5+ 17 Kg5 and 18 Nb8) 17 Na5 Ke7 18 Nb3 Bd7 19 Nc5 Bc8 20 Kg7⊙ (but not 20 Kg5 Kf7) – Black loses the a6-pawn.

On the other hand, Black's resistance is not yet broken – he can lock the king in at g7 for a while by 20…Bf5 21 N×a6 Bd3.

7-56



W

And White will not have an easy trip back: on Kh6, there follows …Kf6, and Black's king advances. White should continue 22 Nb8 Bc2 23 Nc6+ Ke6, when he has two ways to reach the goal:

(a) 24 Kf8 Bg6 25 Na7 Bd3 26 Ke8 Be2 (26…Kf5 27 Kd7 Ke4 28 Nc6+–) 27 Nc6 Kd6 28 Ne7! (28 Ne5 Ke6 29 Kd8 Kf5 30 Nc6 Ke4 31 Kc7 Kd3! 32 Kb6 Kc4 would be weaker) 28…Ke6 29 Kd8 Kd6 (29…Bf1 30 Nc6) 30 Nf5+ Ke6 31 Ne3 Kd6 32 Kc8 Kc6 33 Kb8+–;

(b) 24 Ne5 Kf5 (after the passive 24…Ke7 25 Ng4, White brings the knight to e3, then returns

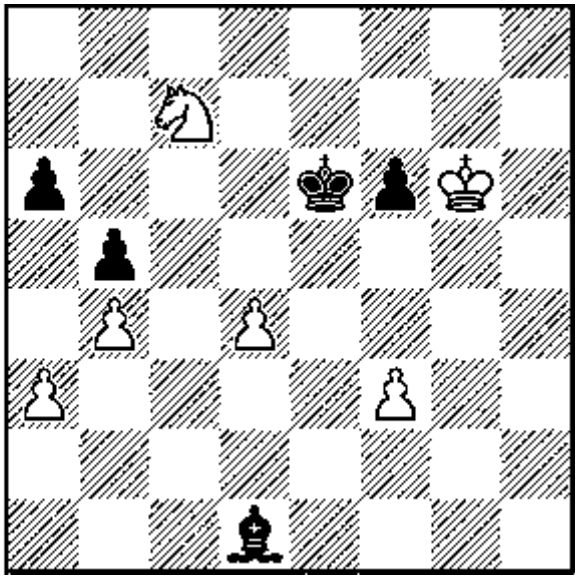
the king unhindered to its own side, and begins preparations for a3-a4, bringing the knight to c3 at the right moment) 25 Kf7 Ke4 (25…Bd1 26 Nc6! Ke4 27 Ke6) 26 Nc6 Bd1 27 Ke6 (27 Ke7? Kd3 28 Kd6 Kc4 29 Ke5 Bf3 would be inexact) 27…Bh5 28 Kd7! (but not 28 Kd6? Be8 29 Ne7 K×d4 30 N×d5 Kc4=) 28…Bg6 (28…Be2 29 Kd6 and 30 Kc5; 28…Kd3 29 a4!) 29 a4! ba 30 b5 a3 31 Nb4+–.

10…Ke6

10…Kd6!? was more exact, leading, after 11 Nc3 (or 11 N×f6 B×f3) 11…B×f3 12 K×f6 Bg2, to a position examined in the last note.

11 Nc7+

7-57



B?

11…Kd7?

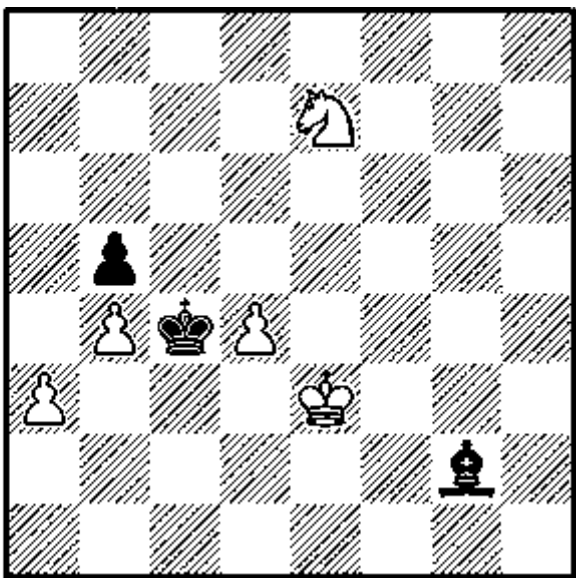
Now Black will be two pawns down. 11…Kd6 was stronger. If 12 Ne8+, then 12…Ke7 (12…Kd5 13 f4 is inferior) 13 N×f6 B×f3 14 Kf5 Kd6 15 Kf4 Bg2 16 Ke3 Bh3, leading to roughly the same positions as after 10…Kd6. And on 12 N×a6 there follows 12…B×f3 13 K×f6 Kd5.

12 N×a6 B×f3 13 K×f6 Kd6 14 Kf5 Kd5 15 Kf4 Bh1 16 Ke3 Kc4 17 Nc5 Bc6 18 Nd3 Bg2

18…Be8!? 19 Ne5+ Kd5 was worth considering. Even with two extra pawns, the outcome is still far from clear – Black's king is too active. He must only be careful not to go after the a3-pawn (when White will lock him in by putting his own king at c3).

19 Ne5+ Kc3 (19…Kd5!?) **20 Ng6 Kc4 21 Ne7**

7-58



B?

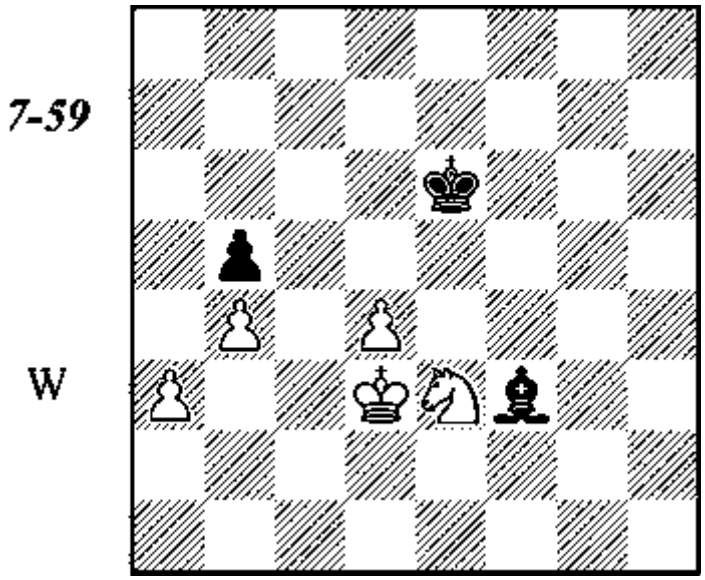
21…Bb7?

21…Kb3? would not have worked in view of 22 d5 K×a3 23 d6 Bh3 24 Nd5. However, it would be safer to keep the bishop in the lower half of the board: 21…Bh1! 22 Nf5 (22 d5? B×d5=)

22…Kd5. Many analysts have diligently examined this position, but none have been able to find a win here. The move Black actually played is a decisive mistake.

22 Nf5 Bg2?

As Speelman and Tisdall indicated, neither 22…Kc3? 23 Kf4! Kb3 24 Ne7 K×a3 25 d5, nor 22…Bc6? 23 Kf4 Kb3 24 Ke5 K×a3 25 Kd6 Be4 26 Ng3 would save Black. He had to play 22…Kd5! 23 Kd3 Ke6!. For example, 24 Ne3 (24 Ng3 Bg2 25 Ne4 Bf1+ 26 Ke3 Kd5 27 Nc3+ Kc4) 24…Bf3! (it is important to prevent White's knight from reaching c3).



25 d5+ Ke5! (but not 25…B×d5? 26 Kd4 △ 27 Kc5) leads to nothing. On 25 Kd2, intending to march the king into the enemy camp, Black does not respond with 25…Kf6? 26 Nd1! and 27 Nc3 (since Black no longer has 26…Kd5), but simply waits – when White's king reaches the eighth rank, the bishop will cut off its path to the queenside along the h3-c8 diagonal.

One interesting try is 25 Kc3 Kd6! (otherwise 26 Kb3 followed by 27 a4 – Black cannot reply 26…Bc6, because of 27 d5+!) 26 a4 (26 Kb3 Bc6 27 d5 Be8 28 Kc3 Ke5=) 26…ba 27 Nc4+ Kd5! (27…Kc7? 28 b5+–) 28 Nb6+ (28 b5 Be2 29 b6 Kc6 30 d5+ Kb7 31 d6 Kc6=) 28…Kc6 29 N×a4 Kb5 (or 29…Bh5). Paradoxically, two extra pawns are insufficient to win here – White has no way to strengthen his position.

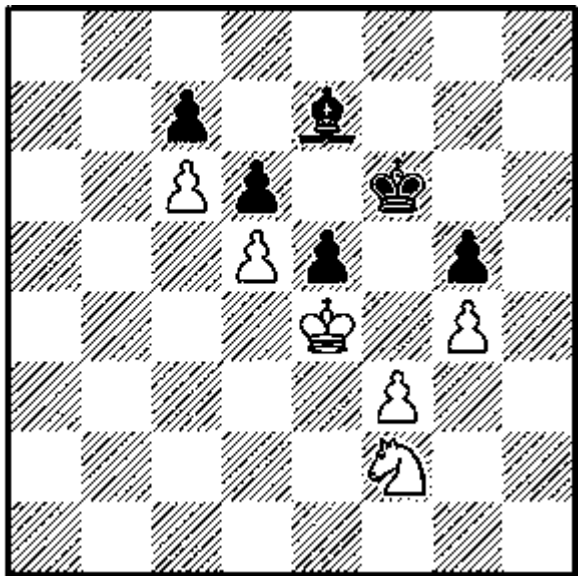
And nevertheless, Karsten Müller has found a subtle means of getting the knight to the key c3-square. After 22…Kd5! 23 Kd3 Ke6!, White plays 24 Ng7+!! Kd7 (24…Kd6 25 Ne8+) 25 Nh5. On 25…Kd6, there follows, not 26 Nf4? Bc8! and 27…Bf5+, but instead 26 Ng3(f6)!, and then 27 Ne4+ and 28 Nc3. And on 25…Bg2 (hoping for 26 Ng3? Ke6! 27 Ne4 Bf1+ and 28…Kd5), then 26 Nf4! Bf1+ 27 Ke4 Kd6 28 Ke3! (zugzwang) 28…Bc4 (28…Kc6 29 d5+ Kd6 30 Kd4 Bc4 31 a4+–) 29 Ne2+– (29…Kd5 30 Nc3+, when the c4-square, which is needed by the king, is occupied by the bishop).

23 Nd6+ Kb3 24 N×b5 Ka4 25 Nd6

Black resigned.

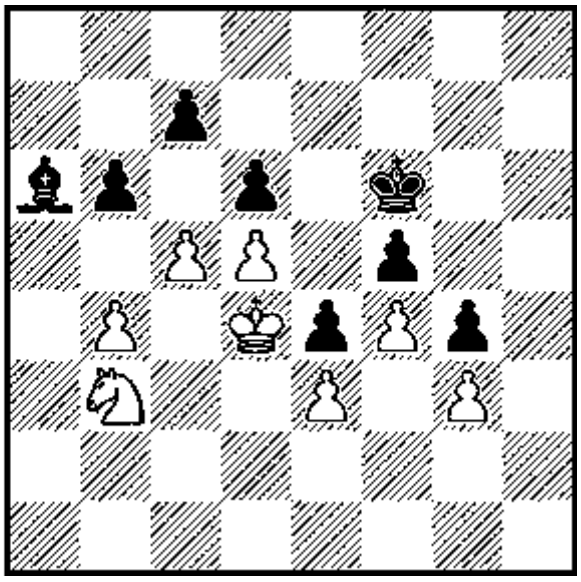
Exercises

7-60



7/14
W?

7-61



7/15
W?

Chapter 8

Rook versus Pawns

Rook vs. Pawn

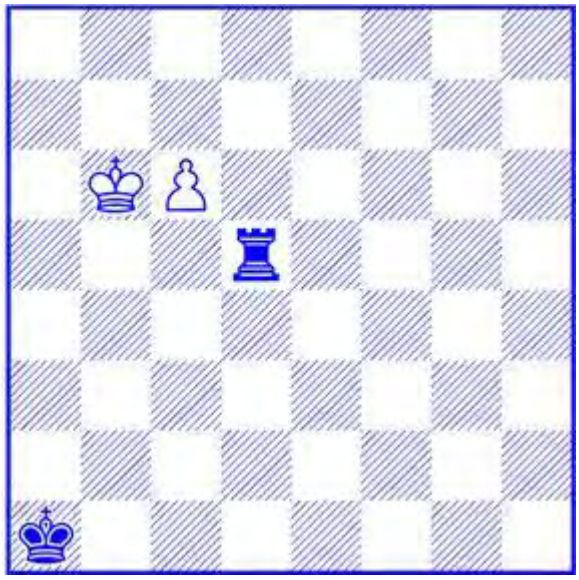
Practically all these endings are “rapid”; the outcome of the fight depends, as a rule, on a single tempo. We shall study typical techniques; mastering them does not free us from the necessity of deep and precise calculations, but makes this job much easier.

“Moving Downstairs”

First let us look at the rarest case, when a pawn is stronger than a rook.

G. Barbier, F. Saavedra, 1895

8-1



1 c7 Rd6+ 2 Kb5! (2 Kc5? Rd1) **2…Rd5+ 3 Kb4 Rd4+ 4 Kb3 Rd3+ 5 Kc2**

This maneuver, which helps the king to avoid checks, is what we call “moving downstairs.” However the fight is not over for the moment.

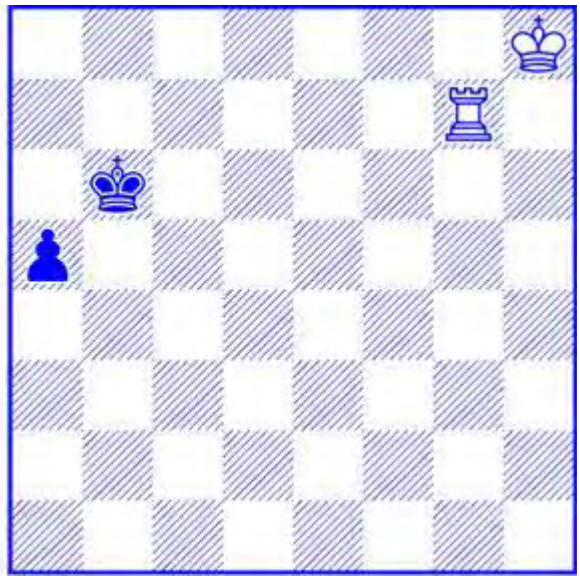
5…Rd4!

If 6 c8Q? then 6…Rc4+! 7 Q×c4 stalemate.

6 c8R!! (△ 7 Ra8+) **6…Ra4 7 Kb3!**+–

Cutting the King Off

8-2



1 Rg5!+–

When the black pawn reaches a3 it will be eliminated by means of Rg3 (the pawn may even come to a2 and then perish after Rg1 followed by Ra1).

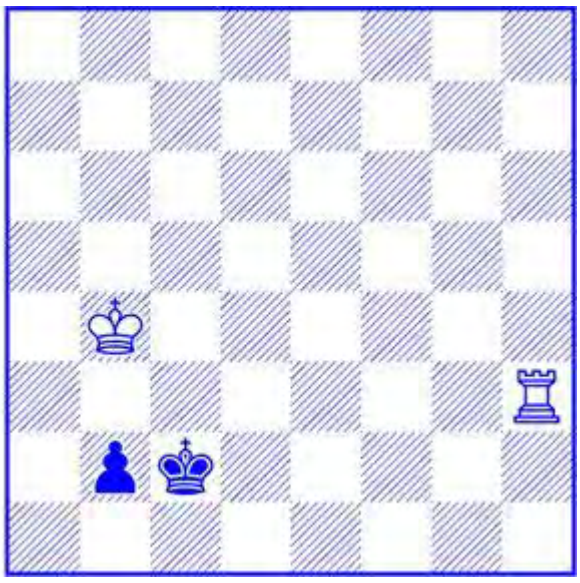
With Black on move, after 1…Kb5(c5)!, the position is drawn, because cutting the king off along the fourth rank brings nothing.

In the starting position, let us move the black king to c6 and the pawn to b5. The strongest move is still 1 Rg5!, but Black can respond with 1…Kb6. However the king transfer to the a-file loses time, and its position is less favorable there than on the c-file (where it “gives a shoulder kick” to the rival king). After 2 Kg7 Ka5 3 Kf6 White arrives in proper time to stop the pawn.

Pawn Promotion to a Knight

8-3

W

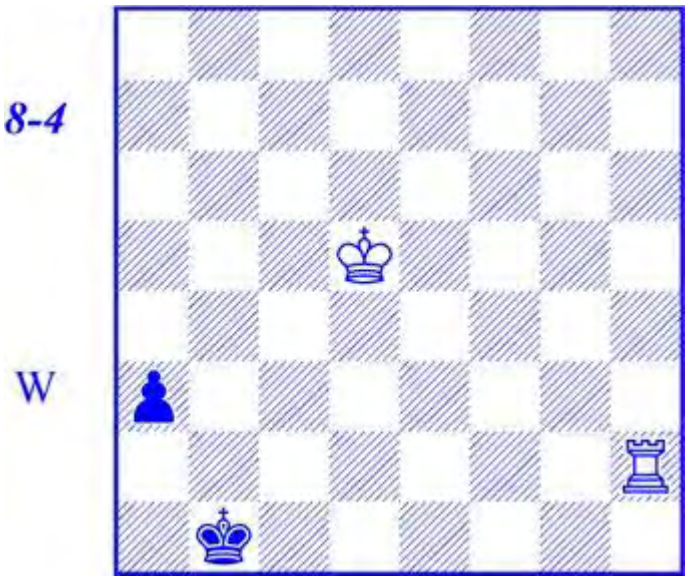


1 Rh2+ Kc1 2 Kc3 b1N+! 3 Kd3 Na3 4 Ra2 Nb1! leads to a draw.

It is worth mentioning that the erroneous 4…Nb5? loses the knight. ***In rook-versus-knight endings, one should not separate the knight from the king.***

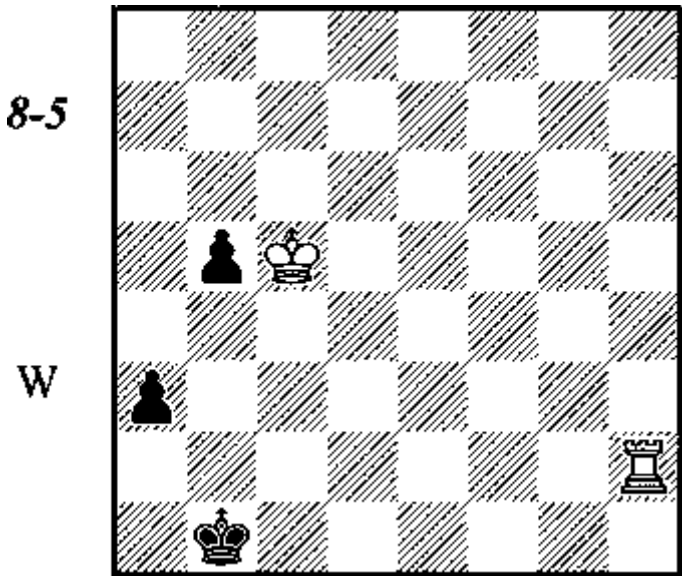
Black can also save himself by stalemate: 1…Kb1! 2 Kb3 Ka1! 3 R×b2. However, with a bishop or a central pawn his only drawing possibility is pawn-to-knight promotion.

If he has a rook pawn instead, this method does not work.



1 Kc4 a2 2 Kb3 a1N+ 3 Kc3⊙+–

By the way, an additional pawn at b5 could not have helped Black.



Kb4 a2 2 Kb3 a1N+ 3 Kc3 b4+ 4 K×b4 Nc2+ 5 Kc3 Ne3 6 Rh4! (another option is 6 Kd3 Nd5 7 Rh4 Kb2 8 Rd4 and the knight, being separated from the king, will die soon) **6…Ka2** (6…Nd1+ 7 Kd2 Nb2 8 Rb4 Ka2 9 Kc2 Ka1 10 Rb8; 6…Nd5+ 7 Kb3 Kc1 8 Rc4+ Kb1 9 Rd4) **7 Ra4+ Kb1 8 Re4 Nf5 9 Re5 Nd6 10 Kb3 Kc1 11 Rc5+ Kb1 12 Rd5+–**.

Stalemate

We have already seen a case of stalemate that has practical value (diagram 8-3). The following position is also worth keeping in mind.

8-6

B?

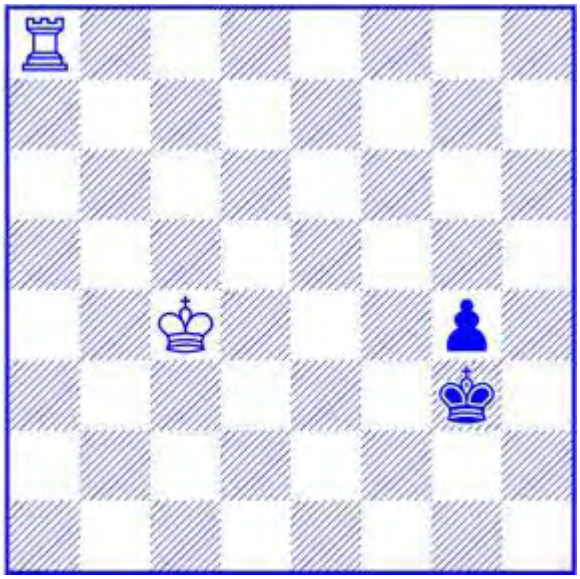
1…a2? 2 Rb8+ Ka3 3 Kc2! a1N+ 4 Kc3 Ka2 5 Rb7⊙ is hopeless. Correct is **1…Kb2! 2 Rb8+** (2 Rh2+ Kb3!, rather than 2…Kb1? 3 Kc3)

2…Kc1! 3 Ra8 Kb2 4 Kd2 a2 5 Rb8+ Ka1!.

An Intermediate Check for a Gain of Tempo

Korchnoi – Kengis
Bern 1996

8-7



B

Kengis resigned in this position, depriving his opponent of the opportunity to demonstrate an exemplary winning solution:

1…Kf2 2 Rf8+!

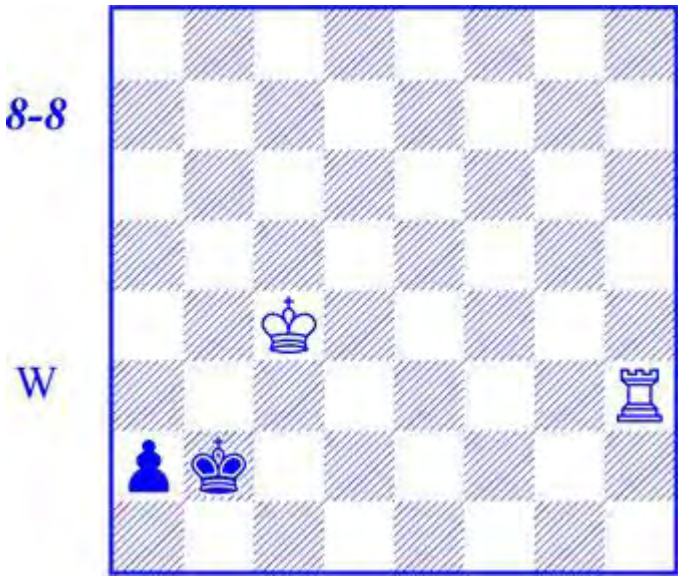
2 Kd3? g3 3 Rf8+ Ke1! leads only to a draw.

2…Ke2 3 Rg8! Kf3

Because of the intermediate check, White succeeded in driving the opposite king back one square, from f2 to f3.

4 Kd3 g3 5 Rf8+ Kg2 6 Ke2+–.

Shouldering

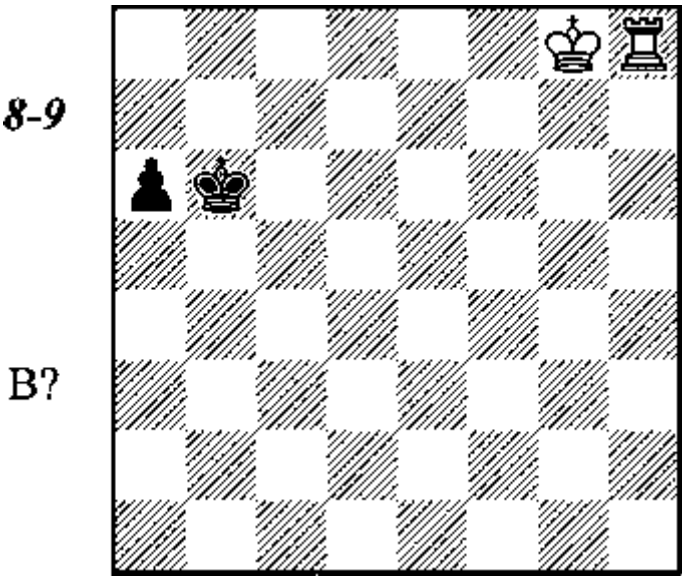


1 Rh2+ Ka3!

Black achieves a draw by not allowing the white king to approach the pawn. 1…Kb1? is erroneous in view of 2 Kb3 a1N+ 3 Kc3.

Let us look at a slightly more complicated case in the following diagram.

I. Maizelis, 1950



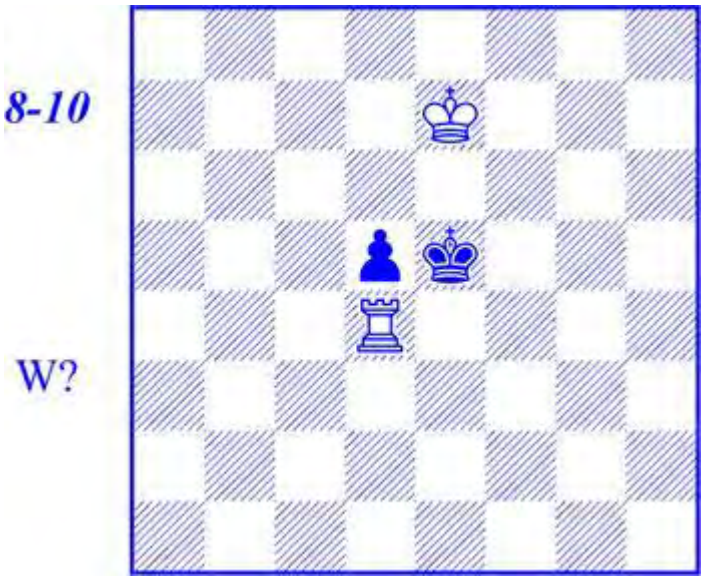
1…a5? is bad because of 2 Rh5! (cutting the king off). However 1…Kb5? 2 Kf7 a5 3 Ke6 a4 4 Kd5 is no better.

Only **1…Kc5!** holds. Black does not allow the white king to approach his pawn.

Outflanking

Shouldering and outflanking ideas are distinctly represented in the following famous endgame study.

R. Réti, 1928



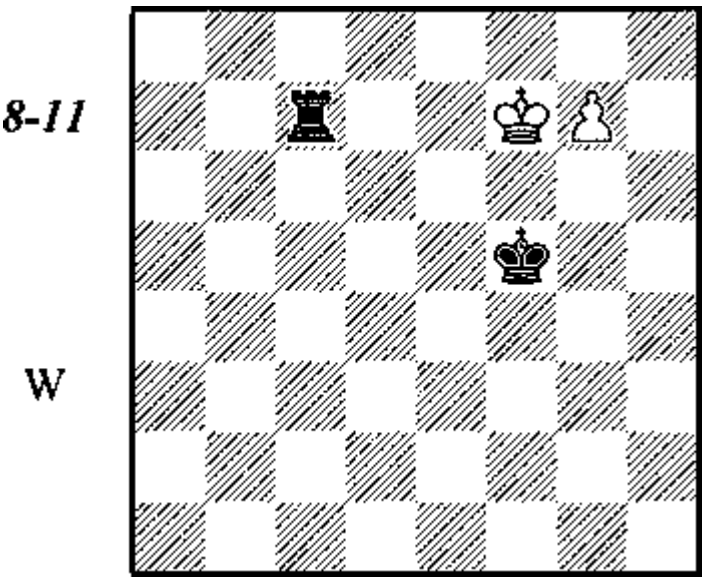
1 Rd2(d3)!! d4 2 Rd1! Kd5 3 Kd7!

Black is in zugzwang: if 3…Kc4, then 4 Ke6 and if 3…Ke4, 4 Kc6.

1 Rd1? is erroneous: 1…d4 2 Kd7 (2 Kf7 Ke4 3 Ke6 d3) 2…Kd5! (Black prevents an outflanking) 3 Kc7 Kc5! (3…Kc4? 4 Kd6! d3 5 Ke5), and it is White who has fallen into zugzwang.

Tragicomedies

Neumann – Steinitz
Baden Baden 1870



1 Kf8

The simplest way is 1 Kg8! Kg6 2 Kh8=.

1…Kf6 2 g8N+! Ke6 3 Nh6 Rh7 4 Ng4??

As we already know, after 4 Ng8! the game would have been drawn. Now White is lost.

4…Rh4

4…Rh3! could have won immediately.

5 Ne3 (5 Nf2 Rf4+) **5…Re4 6 Nd1 Rf4+ 7 Kg7 Rf3 8 Kg6**

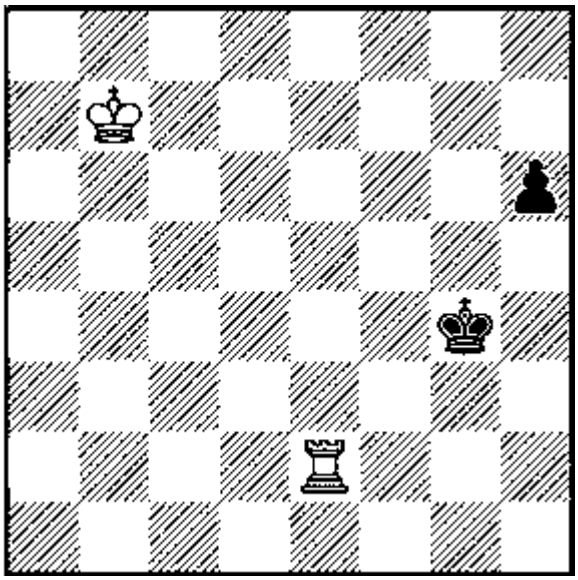
8 Nb2 Kd5 9 Na4 Rb3 △ 10…Kd4 and 11…Rb4 makes no difference.

8…Ke5 9 Kg5 Kd4 10 Kg4 Rf1 11 Nb2 Rb1 12 Na4 Rb4 White resigned.

Fries-Nielsen – Plachetka
Rimavska Sobota 1991

8-12

W?



The actual continuation was **1 Kc6? h5= 2 Kd5 h4 3 Ke4 h3 4 Ke3 Kg3 5 Re1 h2 6 Ke2 Kg2 7 Rh1 K×h1 8 Kf1** Draw.

1 Re8? is no better: 1…h5 2 Rg8+ Kf3 3 Rh8 Kg4 4 Kc6 h4 5 Kd5 h3 6 Ke4 Kg3 7 Ke3 Kg2! (rather than 7…h2?? 8 Rg8+ Kh3 9 Kf2! h1C+ 10 Kf3 Kh2 11 Rg7⊙) 8 Rg8+ Kf1!= or 8 Ke2 h2 9 Rg8+ Kh1!=.

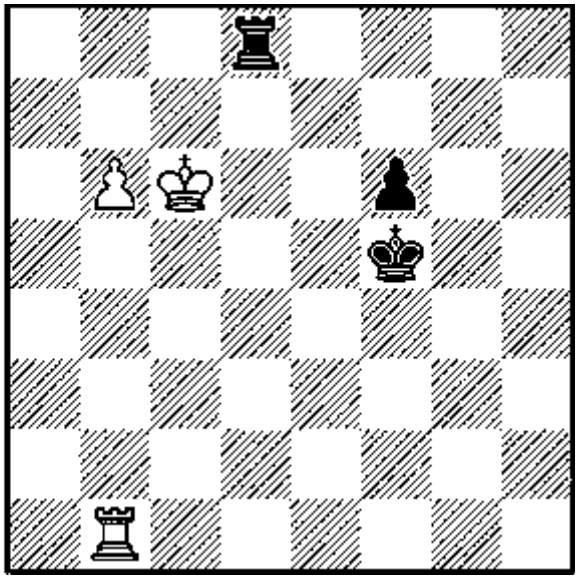
White should have gained a tempo by means of the intermediate check 1 Rg2+! Kf4 (after 1…Kh3, 2 Rg8 h5 3 Kc6 h4 4 Kd5+– the black king, pressed to the edge of the board, is placed extremely badly) 2 Rh2! Kg5 3 Kc6 h5 4 Kd5 h4 5 Ke4 Kg4 6 Rg2+ Kh3 7 Rg8+–.

Alekhine – Bogoljubow

Germany/The Netherlands wm (19) 1929

8-13

B?

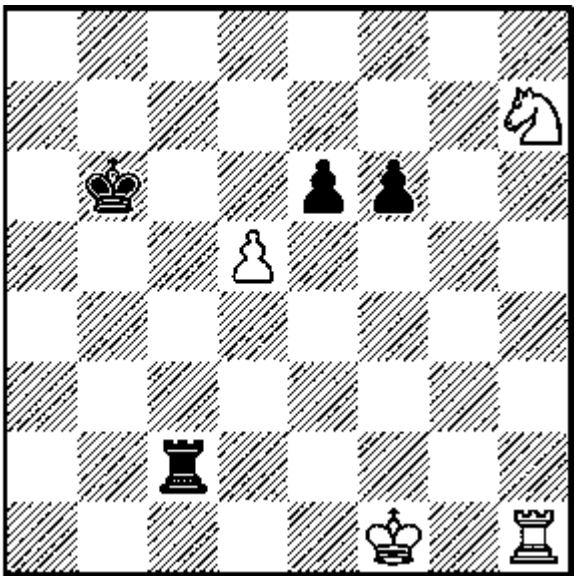


The world championship challenger played **1…Kg4??** and resigned after **2 b7 f5 3 b8Q R×b8 4 R×b8 f4 5 Kd5 f3 6 Ke4 f2 7 Rf8 Kg3 8 Ke3**

He should have applied the shouldering method: 1…Ke4!. It is easy to see that in this case the position would have been drawish: the black king prevents his opponent from getting to the black pawn in time.

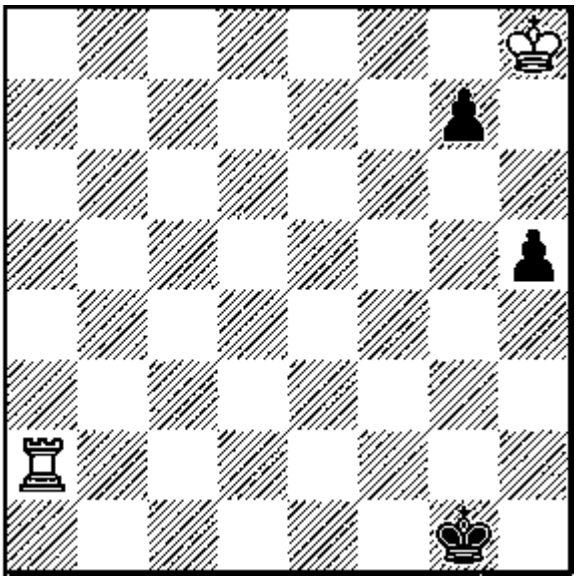
Exercises

8-14



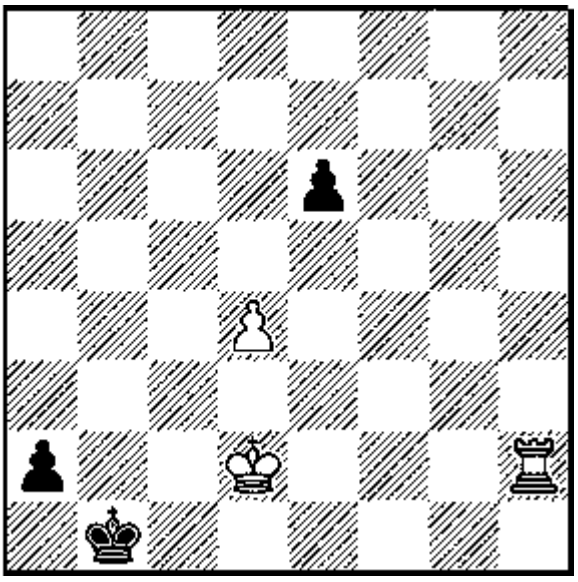
8/1
W?

8-15



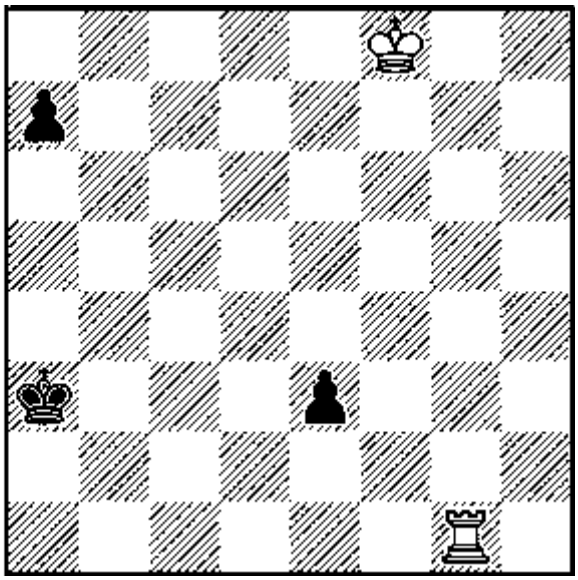
8/2
W?

8-16



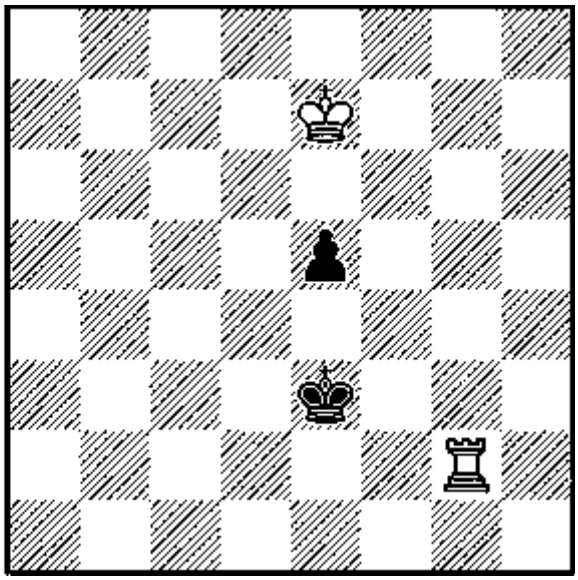
8/3
W?

8-17



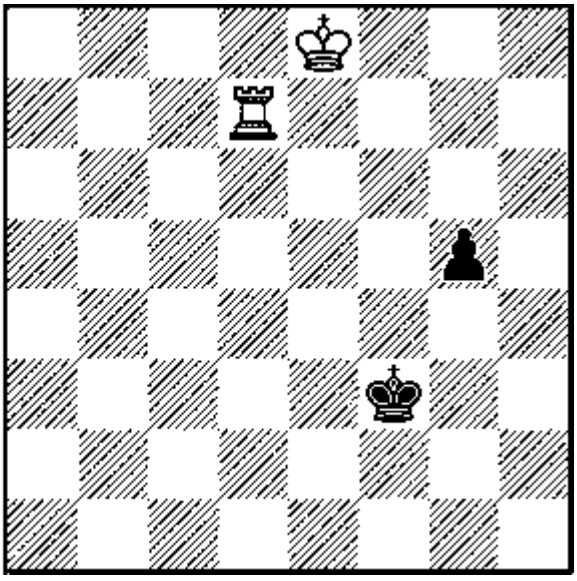
8/4
W?

8-18



8/5
W?

8-19

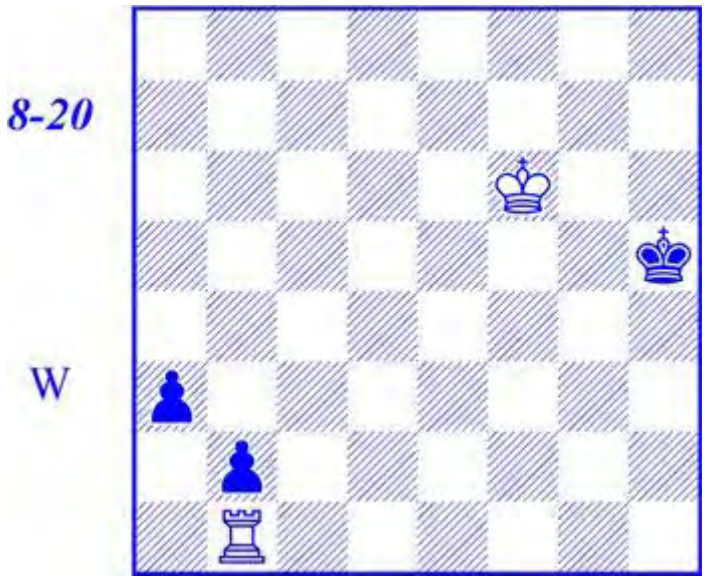


8/6
W?/Play

Rook vs. Connected Pawns

If two black pawns are placed on the third rank, or one pawn has reached the second rank while the other is on the fourth rank, a rook cannot stop them. Sometimes, however, White can save himself by creating ***checkmate threats***, when the black king is pressed to an edge of the board.

B. Horwitz, J. Kling, 1851



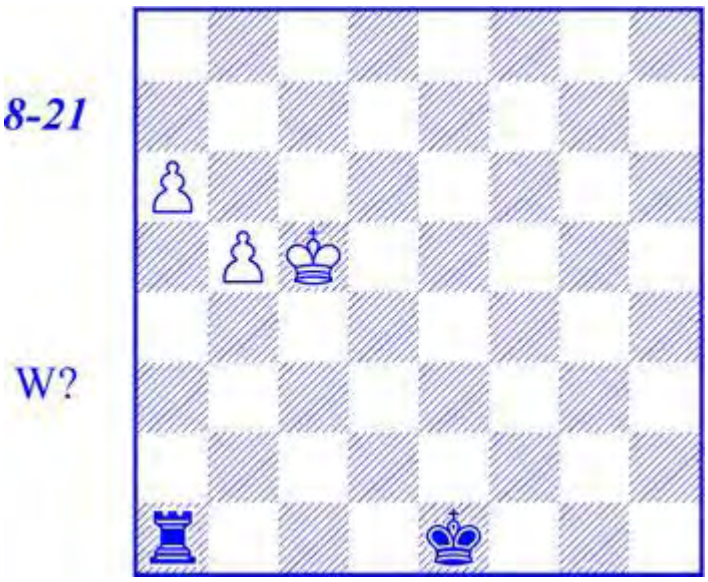
1 Kf5 Kh4 2 Kf4 Kh3 3 Kf3 Kh2 4 Ke3! Kg2

Or 4…Kg3 5 Rg1+ Kh4 6 Kf4 Kh3 7 Kf3, and here 7…Kh2?? 8 Rb1 even loses for Black in view of zugzwang.

5 Kd3 Kf3 6 Kc3 a2 7 K×b2 (or 7 Rf1+) with a draw.

The following simple example demonstrates several very important practical ideas.

Topalov – Beliavsky
Linares 1995



After 1 b6?, 1…R×a6? 2 b7 Ra5+ 3 Kc4 etc., loses (moving downstairs). Black holds with the ***intermediate check prior to the capture of the pawn:*** 1…Ra5+!=.

1 Kb6 Kd2

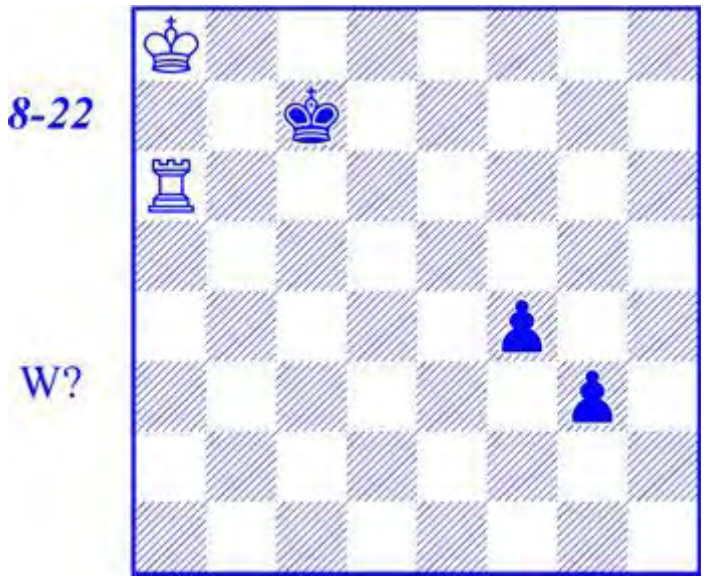
If 2 a7? now, then 2…Kc3 3 Kb7 Kb4 4 b6 Kb5=. Here we observe "***the tail-hook***" again; the techniques that we know from bishop versus pawn endings (diagram 4-30).

2 Ka7!

Black resigned in view of 2…Kc3 3 b6 Kc4 4 b7 Rb1 5 b8Q R×b8 6 K×b8.

We call this method "***a change of the leader***." Why does White push the less advanced b-pawn? First of all, because the rook, being placed on another file, does not prevent its advance. In addition, the a-pawn that remains on the board after the win of the rook is more remote from the black king, so its "tail holding" will be more difficult.

In a battle against two connected passed pawns, ***the best position for the rook is behind the more advanced pawn.***



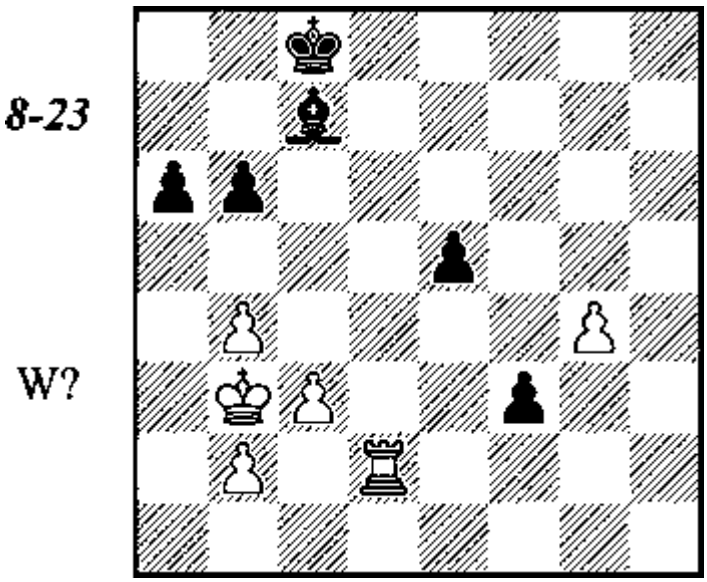
1 Rg6! Kd7 2 Rg4! g2! 3 R×g2 Ke6 4 Rg5! and White wins because the black king is cut off from the pawn along the fifth rank.

Sozin demonstrated a similar position in 1931, with the only difference that the white king stood on a7. In that case, after 1 Rg6! Kd7, an alternative solution occurs: 2 Kb6 Ke7 3 Kc5 Kf7 4 Rg4 Kf6 5 Kd4! (5 R×f4+? Kg5 6 Rf8 Kg4 7 Kd4 g2=) 5…Kf5 6 Rg8+–.

This line does not work when the king is placed on a8: 1 Rg6! Kd7 2 Kb7? Ke7 3 Kc6 Kf7 4 Rg4 Kf6 5 Kd5 Kf5 6 Rg8 f3! 7 Kd4 (7 R×g3 Kf4 8 Rg8 f2=; 7 Rf8+ Kg4 8 Ke4 f2 9 Ke3 Kh3=) 7…f2 8 Ke3 f1C+! with a draw.

It should be noticed that the rook should be placed in the rear of the more advanced pawn similarly, even when other forces conduct the fight.

Alekhine – Tartakower
Vienna 1922



Alekhine analyzes the natural continuations 1 Kc2, 1 Kc4, 1 g5, 1 Rh2 and shows that all of them are good enough at best for a draw. But his beautiful concept wins:

1 Rd5!!

“The variations springing from this rather unlikely move (it attacks one solidly defended pawn and allows the immediate advance of the other) are quite simple when we have described the basic idea – the *black pawns are inoffensive*: (1) *When they occupy squares of the same color as their bishop*, for in that case White’s king can hold them back without difficulty by occupying the appropriate white squares, e.g., 1…f2 2 Rd1 e4 3 Kc2 Bf4 4 Rf1 followed by 5 Kd1; and (2) *When*

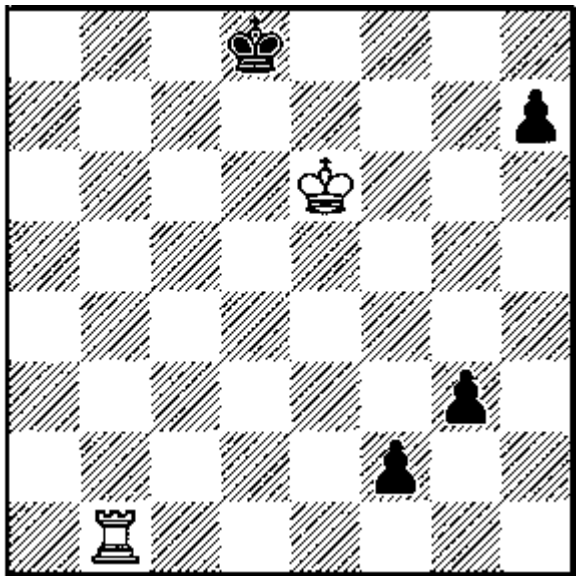
the rook can be posted behind them, but without loss of time, e.g., 1…e4 2 Rf5 Bg3 3 g5 e3 4 R×f3 e2 5 Re3" (Alekhine).

Tragicomedies

Arulaid – Gurgenidze
Lugansk tt 1956

8-24

W



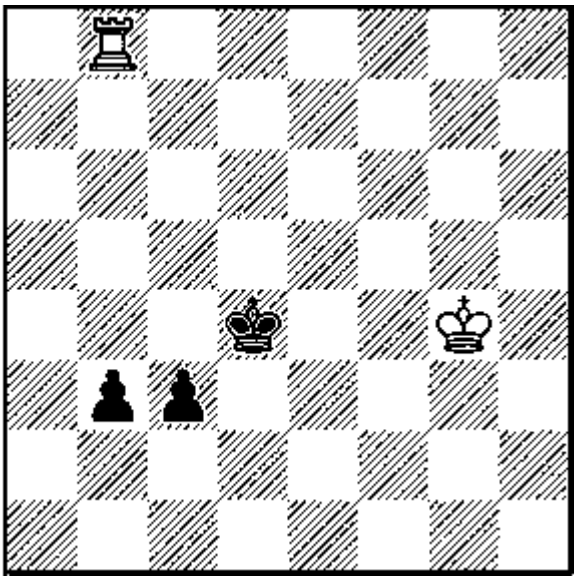
The game was adjourned and White resigned without resuming the play. However the adjourned position was drawish; White could have held it by means of mate threats:

1 Kd6! Kc8 (1…Ke8 2 Ke6 Kf8 3 Kf6=) **2 Rc1+ Kb7 3 Rb1+ Ka6 4 Kc6 Ka5 5 Kc5 Ka4 6 Kc4 Ka3 7 Kc3 Ka2 8 Rf1 h5 9 Kd3**= △ 10 Ke3; 10 R×f2.

Fridstein – Lutikov
USSR ch tt, Riga 1954

8-25

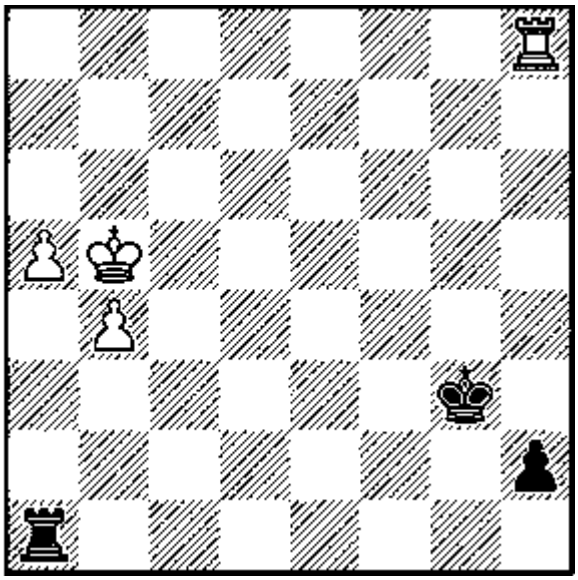
W?



Another case of a totally groundless capitulation. The intermediate check **1 Rb4+!** led to a draw.

Maróczy – Tarrasch
San Sebastian 1911

8-26



W

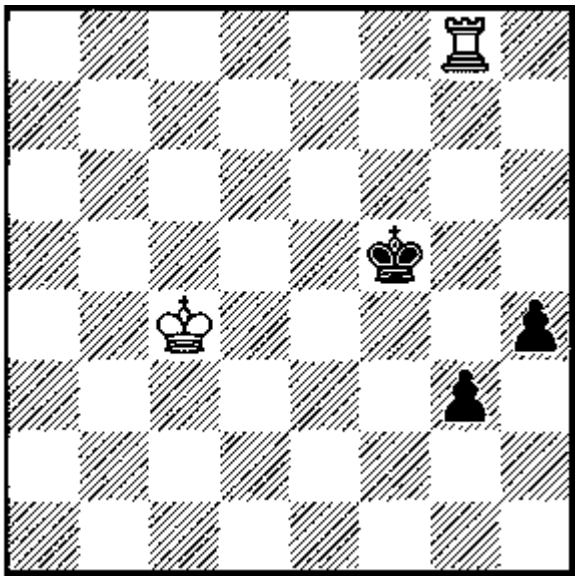
After 1 R×h2! K×h2, an immediate “change of the leader” wins: 2 Ka6! Kg3 3 b5 Kf4 4 b6 Ke5 5 b7 Rb1 6 Ka7 Kd6 7 b8Q+ R×b8 8 K×b8+–. The move 2 a6? misses the win: 2…Kg3 3 Kb6 Kf4 4 b5 Ke5 5 Ka7 (5 a7 Kd5 6 Kb7 Kc5=) 5…Kd6 6 b6 Rb1! 7 Kb7 (7 b7 Kc7) 7…Kc5=.

White could also have played 1 Ka6! Ra4 (1…h1Q 2 R×h1 R×h1 3 b5) 2 R×h2 R×b4 3 Rh5 △ 4 Rb5+–.

The actual continuation was **1 Kc6?? Rc1+ 2 Kb6 Rc4!** (△ 3…Rh4) **3 R×h2 R×b4+ 4 Kc5 Ra4 5 Kb5 R×a5+** Draw.

Penrose – Perkins
Great Britain ch, Brighton 1972

8-27



B?

This position is evaluated as drawn in *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*. In fact, Black can win it rather simply by means of shouldering followed by moving downstairs.

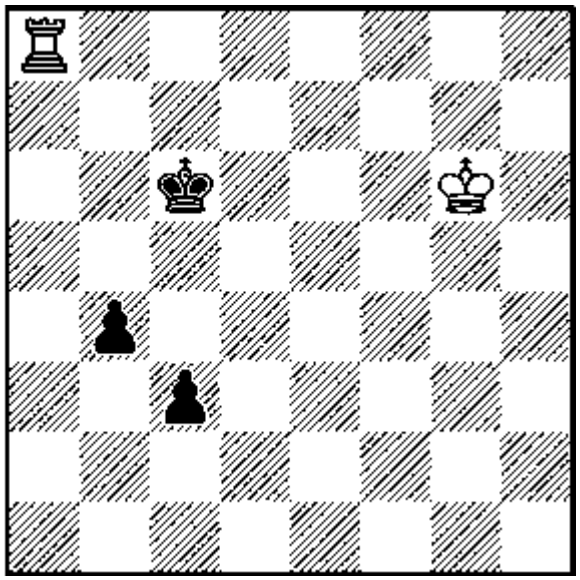
1…Ke4! 2 Rg4+ (2 Rg7 Kf3–+) 2…Kf3 3 R×h4 g2 4 Rh3+ Kf4 5 Rh4+ Kf5 6 Rh5+ Kf6 7 Rh6+ Kg7–+.

The game continued **1…Kf4? 2 Kd4 Kf3** (2…h3 3 Rf8+ Kg4 4 Ke4 h2 5 Rg8+ Kh3 6 Kf4=) **3 Rf8+ Kg2 4 Ke3 h3 5 Rh8 Kh2** (5…h2 6 Kf4=) **6 Rg8! g2 7 Kf2 Kh1 8 Rg7 h2 9 R×g2** Draw.

A. Petrosian – Tseshkovsky
USSR ch (1), Minsk 1976

8-28

B?



Black has an elementary win: 1…Kd7! (threatening with 2…c2 or 2…b3) 2 Ra7+ Kd6 3 Ra6+ Kd5, etc. He played less precisely:

1…Kd5?! 2 Kf5

In this position, the game was adjourned. Later in a hotel room, Petrosian demonstrated the following continuation to his rival: 2…b3 (2…c2 3 Rd8+ Kc4 4 Ke4!=) 3 Rd8+ Kc4 4 Ke4, and showed him a volume of *Chess Endings* edited by Averbakh where the final position is evaluated as drawn in connection with the line 4…b2 5 Rc8+ Kb3 6 Rb8+ Kc2 7 Kd4=.

The opponent's arguments and the authority of the book convinced Tseshkovsky, and he accepted the proposed draw.

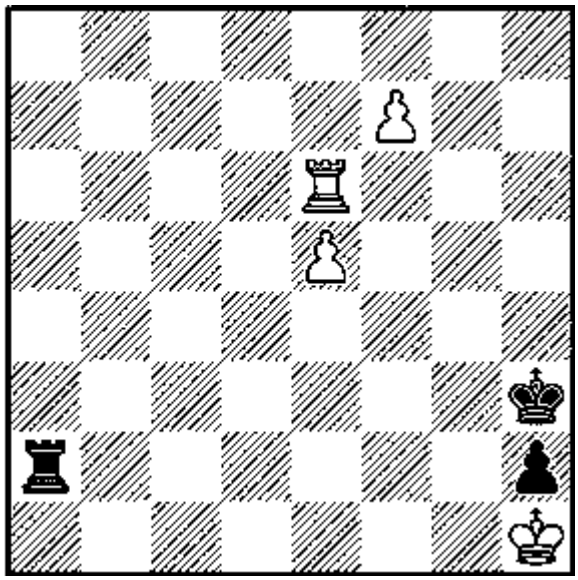
It was however an unfounded decision! Black's play can be improved by means of 3…Kc5! (instead of 3…Kc4?) 4 Rc8+ (4 Ke4 b2 5 Rc8+ Kd6–+) 4…Kd4 5 Rd8+ Ke3 6 Rb8 b2. Curiously enough, the resulting position is examined on the same page of the same book and, as Tarrasch proved in 1912, it is won!

7 Ke5 Kf3! (rather than 7…c2? 8 Rb3+) 8 Kf5 (8 Rb3 Kg4–+) 8…Ke2! 9 Ke4 Kd1 10 Kd3 c2 11 Rh8 c1N+! and 12…b1Q.

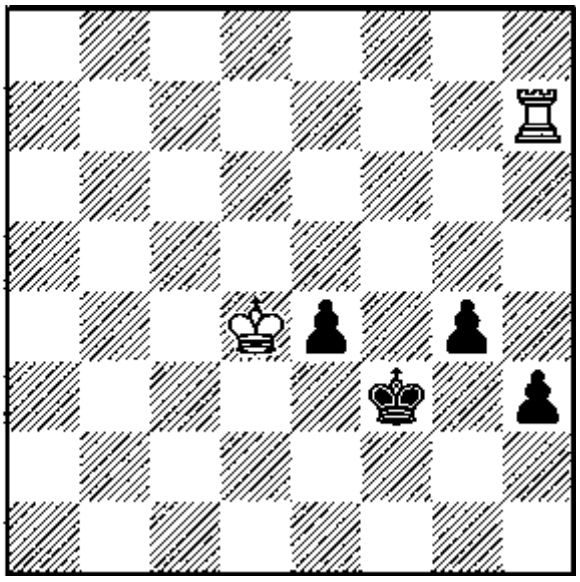
Exercises

8-29

8/7
W?

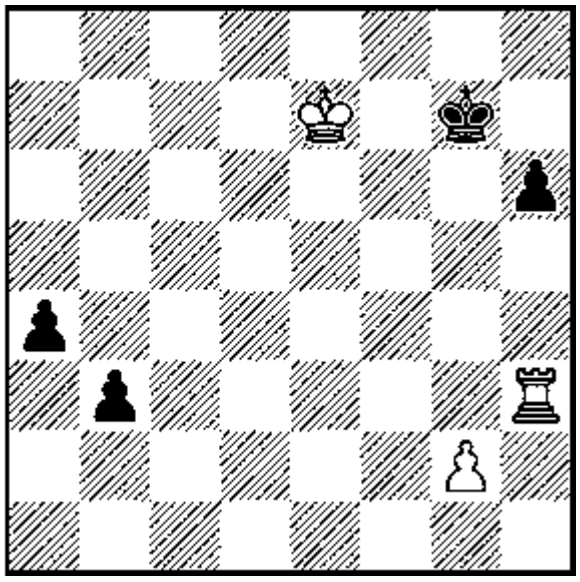


8-30



8/8
W?

8-31



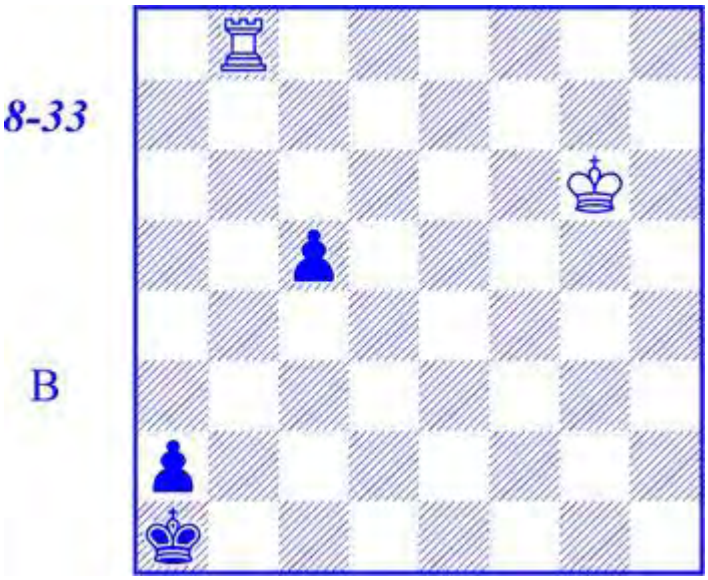
8/9
W?

Rook vs. Separated Pawns

8-32

W

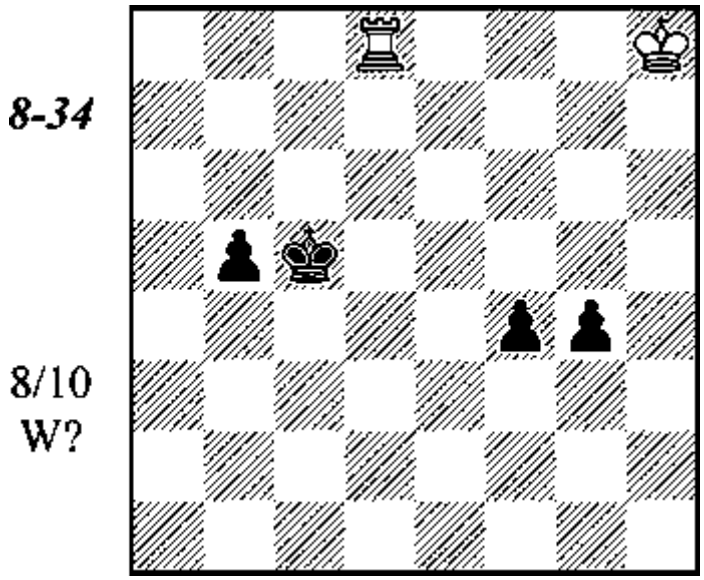
If four files separate the pawns, then the rook can stop them without help of its king.
1 Rb1! (parrying the threat 1…Kf2) **1…Kd3** (△ 2…Kc2) **2 Rg1!**=
Move the b2-pawn to c2. Now the position is lost (1 Rc1 Kd2–+).



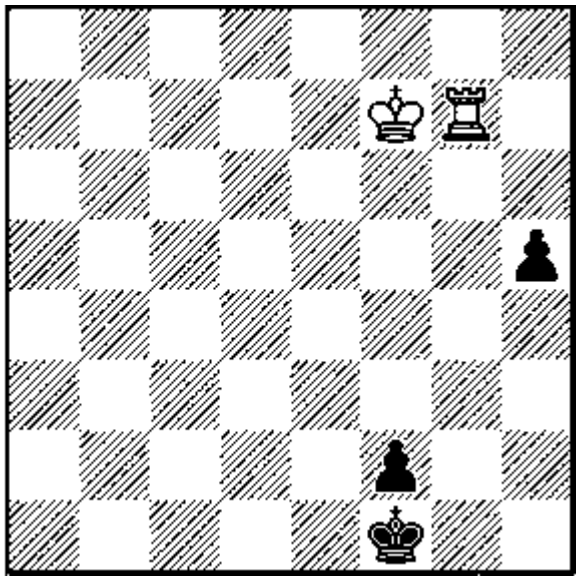
1…c4 2 Kf5
2 Rc8 c3!, and if 3 R×c3, then …Kb2 and the a-pawn promotes.
2…c3 3 Rc8
After 3 Ke4 c2 4 Rc8 Kb2 5 Rb8+ Kc3 6 Rc8+, both 6…Kd2 and 6…Kb4 win.
3…Kb2 4 Rb8+ Kc2(a3) 5 Ra8 Kb3 6 Rb8+ Kc4 7 Ra8 c2–+.

This is perhaps all one should remember about this sort of position. Some additional ideas are shown to you in the exercises for this section.

Exercises

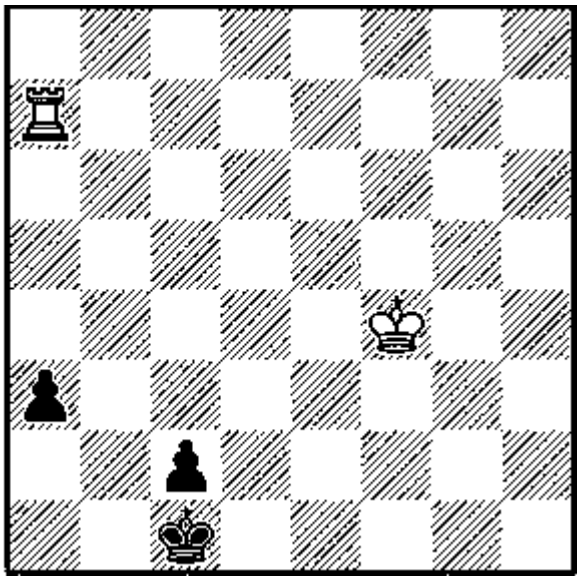


8-35



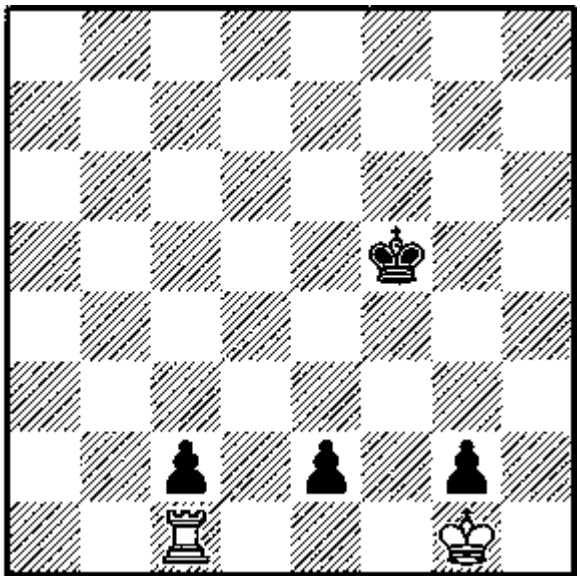
8/11
W?

8-36



8/12
W?

8-37



8/13
W?

Chapter 9

Rook Endgames

Rook endings are perhaps the most important and most difficult kind of endgame. Most important, because they occur in practice much more often than other endings. Most difficult, because one must absorb and remember a much greater volume of knowledge than in endings with other material relationships.

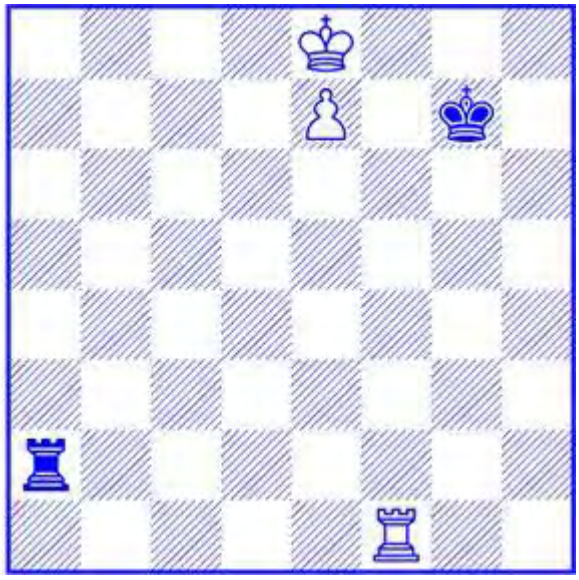
The reason is that, in other endgames, situations with a minimum number of pawns on the board are either elementary or not very important. Therefore one needs only to remember a very limited number of precise positions, as it is highly improbable that one would meet them in practical play. So, mastering the basic ideas and methods is fully sufficient in those cases.

In rook endings, however, a sophisticated theory of positions with reduced material exists (for example, those with R+P against R), and these situations occur very often in practice. This means that we cannot omit studying a considerable number of precise positions.

Rook and Pawn vs. Rook

The Pawn on the Seventh Rank

9-1



In chess literature, this situation is usually referred to as ***"The Lucena Position,"*** even though the Spaniard Lucena did not examine it in his book published in 1497. The first mention of an analogous position was in the book by Salvio (1634), which referred to Scipione of Genoa.

If White is on move he wins:

1 Rg1+ Kh7 2 Rg4!

2 Kf7 is premature in view of 2…Rf2+ 3 Ke6 Re2+ 4 Kf6 Rf2+, and the king has only one way to take refuge from rook checks: by returning to e8. The rook move prepares an interference at e4. This method is called ***building a bridge***, or simply ***bridging***.

2…Rd2 (2…Ra8+ 3 Kf7) **3 Kf7 Rf2+ 4 Ke6 Re2+ 5 Kf6 Rf2+**

If 5…Re1, then 6 Rg5 △ 7 Re5.

6 Ke5 Re2+ 7 Re4+–

It is worth mentioning that White has other winning options:

1 Rg1+ Kh7 2 Re1!+–.

1 Rg1+ Kh7 2 Rd1!+– (the immediate 1 Rd1 is also good) 2…Kg7 3 Kd7 Ra7+ 4 Ke6 Ra6+ 5 Rd6 Ra8 6 Rd8+–.

Now let us see what happens if Black is on move.

1…Ra8+ 2 Kd7 Ra7+ 3 Kd6 Ra6+ 4 Kc7 (4 Kc5 Re6) **4…Ra7+** with a draw.

Let us shift all the pieces except for the black rook a single file to left. Then the side checks do not help anymore because the rook is not far enough from the white pawn: 1…Ra8+ 2 Kc7 Ra7+ 3 Kc8 Ra8+ 4 Kb7+–.

Hence we can conclude:

(1) If the pawn is on the seventh rank, multiple winning methods exist. The most important ones are ***building a bridge*** for protection from checks along files and ***a rook maneuver for protection from side checks*** along ranks.

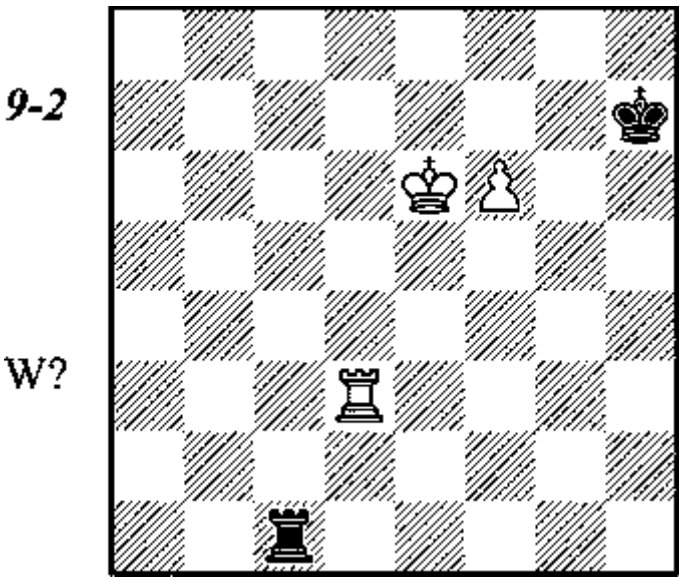
(2) When the king of the weaker side is cut off from the pawn, the only defensive technique consists in ***side checks***.

(3) A rook pursuit of the enemy king can only be successful when ***the rook and the pawn are separated at minimum by three lines***. As we shall see later, this rule does not only pertain to side checks.

(4) A central or a bishop pawn divides the chessboard into two unequal parts: one is "long," another is "short." ***The correct positioning of forces for the weaker side is to keep the king on the short side, and the rook on the long side***.

Tragicomedies

Sax – Tseshkovsky
Rovinj/Zagreb 1975



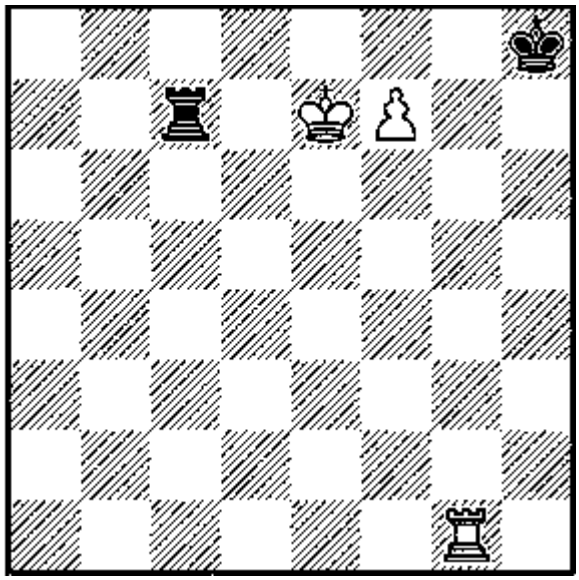
1 Rh3+?

He should not move the rook away from the d-file where it was protecting the king from side checks. An easy win was 1 f7! Rc8 (1…Kg7 2 Rg3+; 1…Re1+ 2 Kf6 Rf1+ 3 Ke7 Re1+ 4 Kf8 Ra1 5 Rh3+ Kg6 6 Kg8+–) 2 Ke7 Rc7+ 3 Rd7+–.

1…Kg6 2 Rg3+

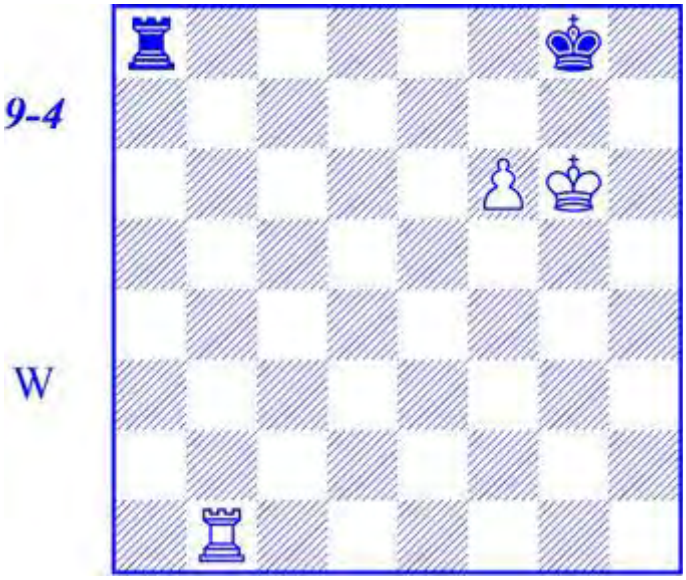
Black resigned, as he failed to recognize that the position had become drawn: 2…Kh7 3 f7 Rc8! (rather than 3…Rc6+? 4 Kd7+–) 4 Ke7 (4 Rd3 Kg7) 4…Rc7+ 5 Ke8 Rc8+ 6 Kd7 Ra8=.

Exercises



The Pawn on the Sixth Rank

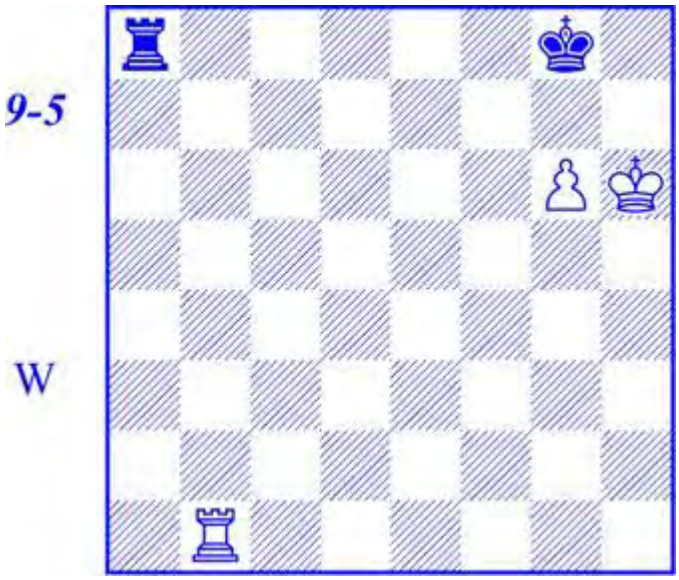
First let us examine the situation when the king of the weaker side is placed in front of the pawn.



Black's rook must remain passive, staying on the eighth rank. White wins easily by bringing his rook to h7.

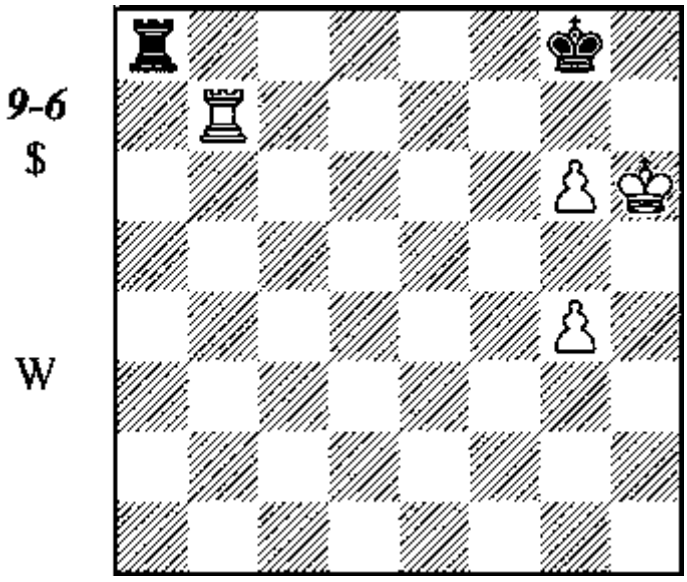
1 Rb7 Rc8 2 Rg7+! (2 Rh7 Rc6) **2…Kf8 3 Rh7 Kg8 4 f7+**

It is worth mentioning that Black can hold the game when he is on move and his rook stands on a7: 1…Rg7+! 2 Kf5 (2 fg stalemate) 2…Rg2. Also, White cannot win if his king is placed on the other side of the pawn, at e6: 1 Rb7 Kf8 (there are other possibilities as well) 2 Kf5 Ra1!=.



1 Rb7 Rc8 2 Rg7+ Kh8! (2…Kf8?? is erroneous in view of 3 Kh7+–) **3 Rh7+ Kg8**=
Conclusion: passive defense holds against a knight pawn but loses against a bishop pawn or a central pawn.

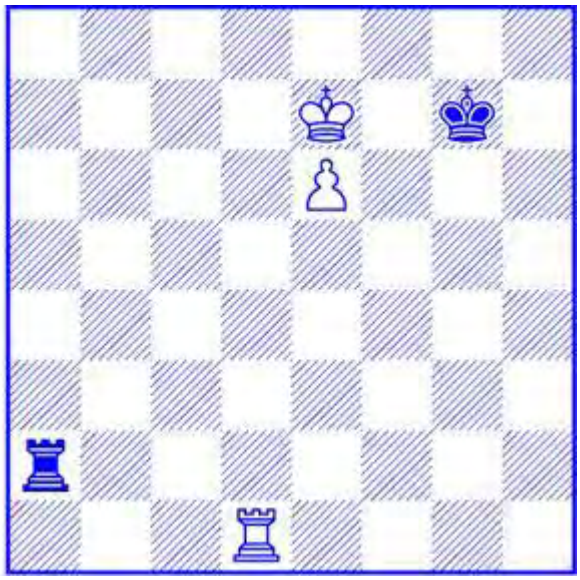
When the stronger side has two knight pawns, then passive defense does not help.



1 Rb6! Rf8 2 g5 (2 g7?? Rf6+!) **2…Ra8 3 g7 Rc8 4 Rf6**+– △ 5 Rf8+.

Now we come to positions with the king cut off from the enemy pawn.

9-7



When on move, White wins. The simplest way begins with a check from g1, but 1 Ke8 is also possible: we come to the position with the pawn on the seventh rank and the rook on the d-file delivering protection from side checks. For example, 1…Kf6 2 e7 Ra8+ 3 Rd8 Ra7 4 Rd6+ Kg7, and now either 5 Rd1!+– or 5 Re6!+– (but by no means 5 Kd8?? Ra8+ 6 Kd7 Kf7=).

With Black on move, the evaluation changes:

1…Ra7+□ 2 Rd7

2 Ke8 Kf6 3 Re1 Re7+; 2 Kd6 Kf8.

2…Ra8!

The simplest defensive method: Black prevents the position with the pawn on the seventh rank. 2…Ra6?? would have been a grave error in view of 3 Ke8+ Kf6 4 e7, and if 4…Ke6, then 5 Kf8!+–.

However any other rook retreat along the a-file, for example 2…Ra1, does not give up the draw because after 3 Ke8+ (the only correct reply to 3 Rd6!? is 3…Ra8!) 3…Kf6! 4 e7 Ke6! 5 Kf8 Black has 5…Rf1+!. Here he manages to hold only because of the fact that the white rook is misplaced at d7.

3 Rd8

3 Kd6+ is useless: 3…Kf6 (3…Kf8) 4 Rf7+ Kg6=.

The waiting attempt 3 Rb7 can be met either with 3…Kg6 4 Kd6 Kf6 5 e7 Kf7=, or with 3…Ra1 4 Kd7 Ra8 5 e7 Kf7= (but not 3…Kg8?? 4 Kf6 Rf8+ 5 Rf7+–).

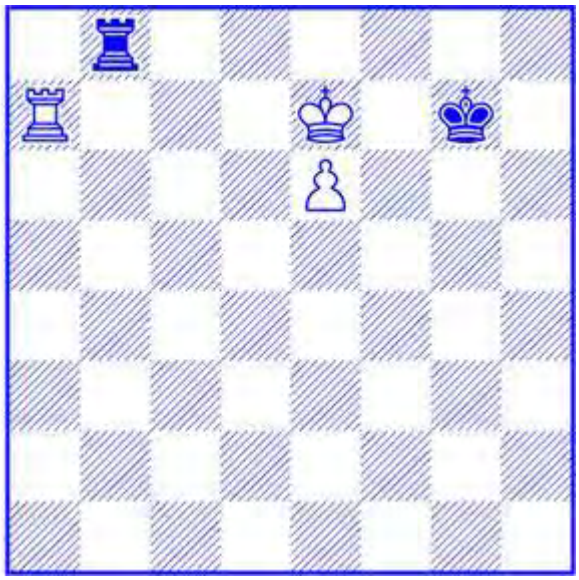
In case of 3 Rd6!?, 3…Ra1? is bad because after 4 Ke8 Kf6, the pawn steps ahead with a check. 3…Rb8? loses to 4 Rd8! Rb7+ 5 Kd6 Rb6+ 6 Kd7. The only correct reply is 3…Kg6!.

3…Ra7+ 4 Kd6 Ra6+ (4…Kf6?? 5 Rf8+ Kg7 6 e7) **5 Ke5 Ra5+! 6 Rd5 Ra8** (6…Ra7?? 7 Rd7+; 6…Ra1!?) **7 Rd7+** (7 e7 Kf7 8 Rd8 Ra5+) **7…Kg6!**= (rather than 7…Kf8?? 8 Kf6 because passive defense does not help against a central pawn).

The reason for the drawn finale was the position of the black rook: it was placed on the long side. Let us shift all the pieces except for the black rook one file to the left. Now when the rook is on the short side, Black, as one can see easily, is lost.

Let us examine another position, not an elementary one, but quite an important one.

9-8



W

Only two files separate the black rook from the pawn, and this circumstance offers White winning chances. However a straightforward attempt 1 Ra1? (△ 2 Rg1+) misses the win: 1…Rb7+ 2 Kd8 Rb8+ 3 Kc7 Rb2 (△ 4…Kf8 or 4…Kf6) 4 Rf1 Ra2! 5 e7 Ra7+ with a draw, because the rook managed to deliver long side checks in time.

For a win, White should yield the move to his opponent. As a matter of fact, 1…Rc8 loses to 2 Ra1; in case of 1…Rb1, the white rook occupies the important a8-square; 1…Kg8 2 Kf6 Rf8+3 Rf7 is also bad. Only 1…Kg6 remains for Black but, as we shall see, this move also worsens his position.

1 Kd6+!

But not 1 Kd7? Kf6⊙ 2 e7 Kf7=.

1…Kf6 2 Kd7⊙ Kg7 (2…Rb1 3 e7; 2…Kg6 3 Ra1) **3 Ke7!⊙**

White has achieved his goal by means of triangulation.

3…Kg6

After 3…Rb1, 4 Ra8! wins: 4…Rb7+ (4…Rb2 5 Ke8 Rh2 6 Ra7+ Kf6 7 e7 Rh8+ 8 Kd7) 5 Kd6 Rb6+ (5…Kf6 6 Rf8+ Kg7 7 e7) 6 Kd7 Rb7+ 7 Kc6 Re7 8 Kd6 Rb7 9 e7.

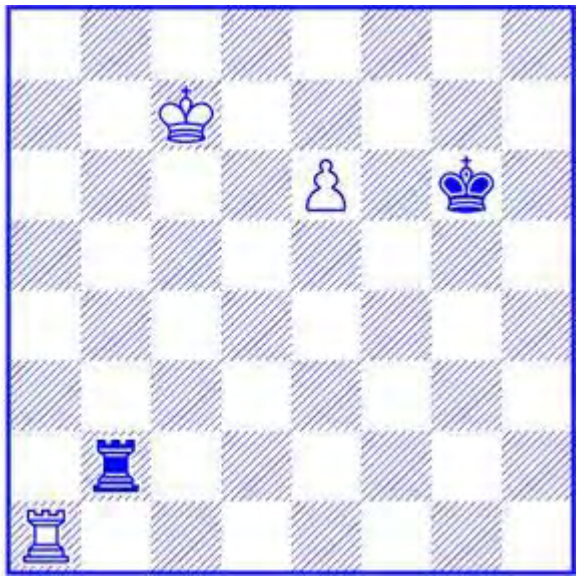
4 Ra1! Rb7+ 5 Kd8

5 Kd6 is also good.

5…Rb8+

After 5…Kf6, White's winning method is instructive: 6 e7! Rb8+ (6…R×e7 7 Rf1+) 7 Kc7 Re8 8 Kd6! Rb8 9 Rf1+ Kg7 10 Kc7 Ra8 11 Ra1!+–.

9-9



W?

7 Re1!

This is the point! With the king at g7, Black could have played 7…Kf8, while now the pawn

cannot be stopped.

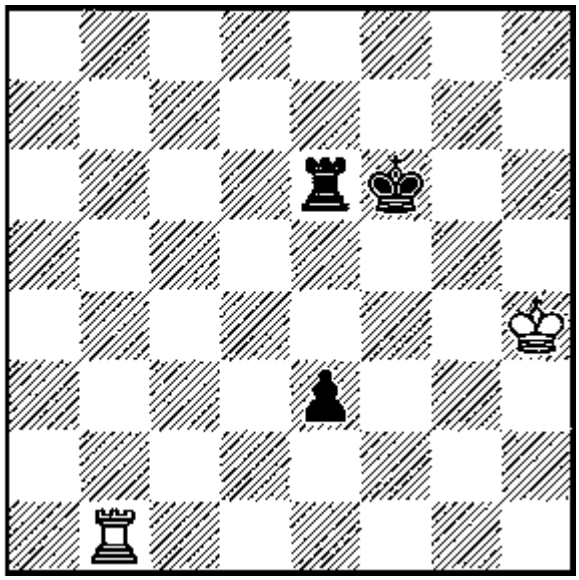
7…Rc2+ 8 Kd7 Rd2+ 9 Ke8 Ra2 10 e7+–.

Tragicomedies

Uhlmann – Gulko
Niksic 1978

9-10

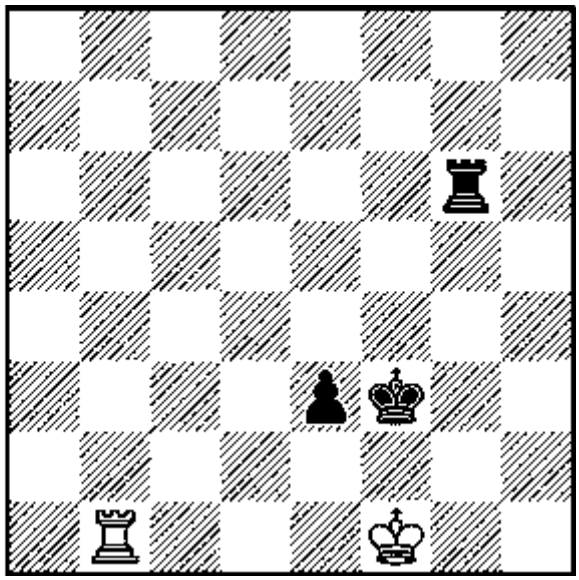
B?



1…Kf5??
After 1…e2! 2 Re1 Re3! 3 Kg4 Ke5, White would have had to resign.
2 Kg3 Ke4 3 Kg2!
The only move. Both 3 Rb4+? Kd3 4 Rb3+ Kc2 and 3 Ra1? Rg6+ are erroneous.
3…Rg6+
After 3…Rf6 4 Ra1! the white rook, occupying the long side, assures an easy draw.
4 Kf1 Kf3

9-11

W?



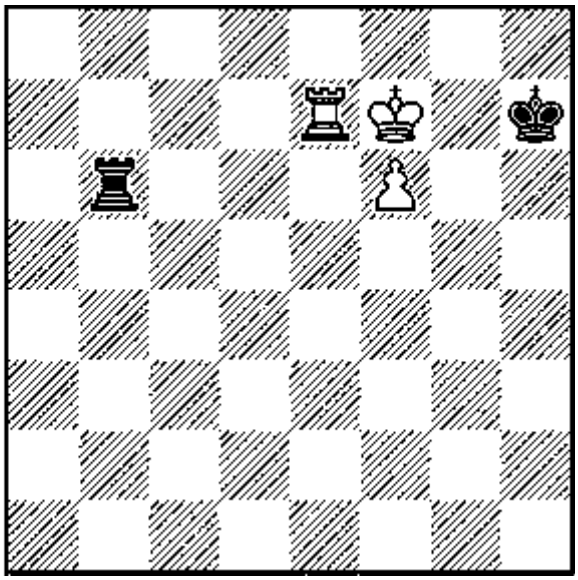
5 Rb3??
And again the position is lost (a passive defense against a central pawn). Necessary was 5 Rb2! Ra6 6 Rf2+! (we saw this stalemate when discussing diagram 9-4).
5…Ra6 6 Rb1 Rh6 7 Kg1 Rg6+ White resigned.

One of the most famous “comedy of errors” occurred in the following endgame.

Capablanca – Menchik

Hastings 1929

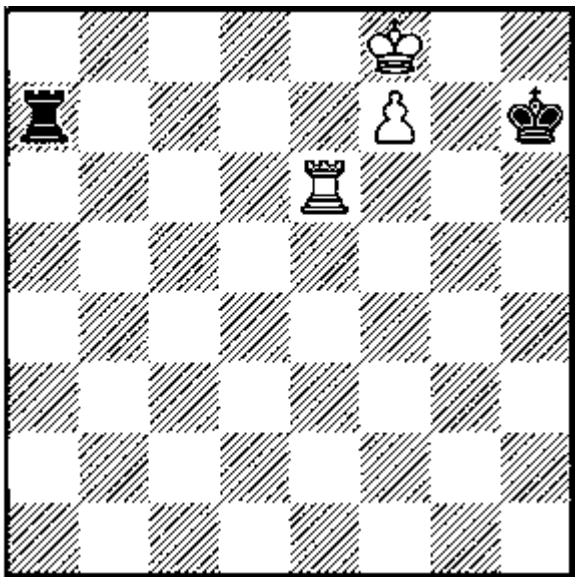
9-12



B

1…Ra6?? (1…Rb8=; 1…Rb1=) **2 Rd7??**
Capablanca grants his lady rival “amnesty.” 2 Kf8+ wins.
2…Ra8 3 Re7 Ra6??
Black repeats the same error.
4 Kf8+! Kg6 5 f7 Ra8+ (5…Kf6 6 Kg8!) **6 Re8 Ra7 7 Re6+ Kh7**

9-13

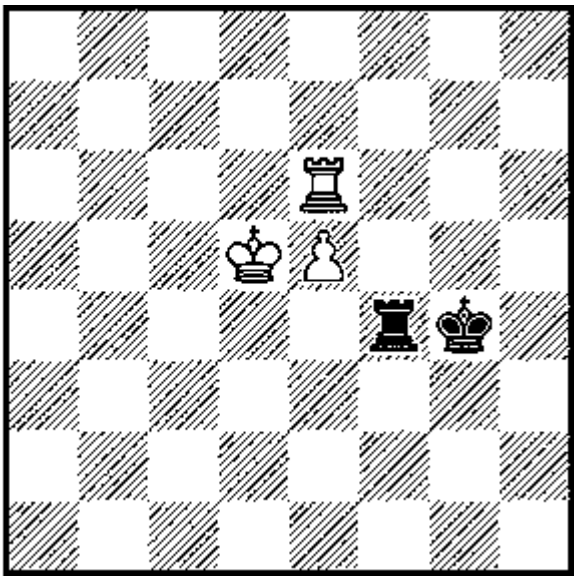


W

8 Ke8??
A single step away from reaching the goal, White misses again. Both 8 Re1 and 8 Rf6 won.
8…Ra8+ 9 Ke7 Ra7+??
9…Kg7! led to a draw.
10 Kf6 Black resigned.

Alburt – Dlugy
USA ch, Los Angeles 1991

9-14



B?

1…Kg5?

Black could have had an easy draw after 1…Ra4!, occupying the long side with his rook.

2 Ra6! Rb4

The game was adjourned in this position. Grandmaster Dlugy, assisted during home analysis by two experienced colleagues, Wolff and Ivanov, failed to understand the essence of the position, and his first move after the resumption of play was a decisive error. What is even more striking is that Dlugy had the classic work by Levenfish and Smyslov on rook endings at his disposal. In that book, naturally, the position at diagram 9-8 is examined. Black had to avoid that position but, after a short while, it arose on the board anyway.

3 Ke6

If 3 Kd6 then 3…Kf5!= (3…Kg6?? 4.Kc5+).

3…Kg6??

After 3…Rb7, we have the above mentioned basic position but shifted one line down, and this circumstance could enable Black to hold. Both 3…Rb8 and 3…Rb1 were playable, too.

4 Ke7+ Kg7 5 Ra7!+–

Black had obviously expected only 5 e6? Rb7+ 6 Kd8 Rb8+ 7 Kc7 Rb1=.

5…Rb8

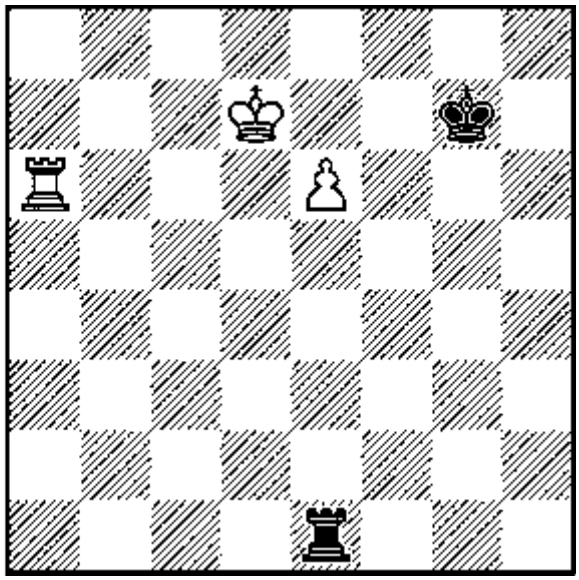
5…Rb6!? 6 e6 Rb8 were more persistent; White had then to employ the triangular maneuver: 7 Kd6+!

Kf6 8 Kd7⊙ Kg7 9 Ke7!⊙.

6 e6⊙ Kg6 7 Ra1 Rb7+ 8 Kd6 Rb6+ 9 Kd7 Rb7+ 10 Kc6 Rb8 11 Kc7 Rh8 (11…Rb2 12 Re1!) **12 e7** Black resigned.

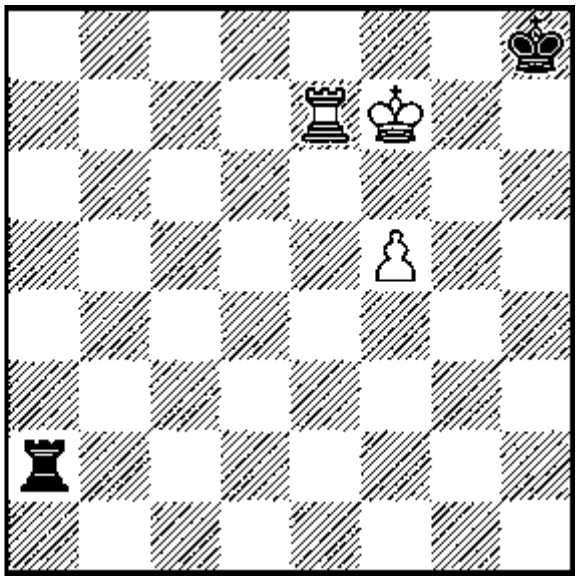
Exercises

9-15



9/2
B?

9-16

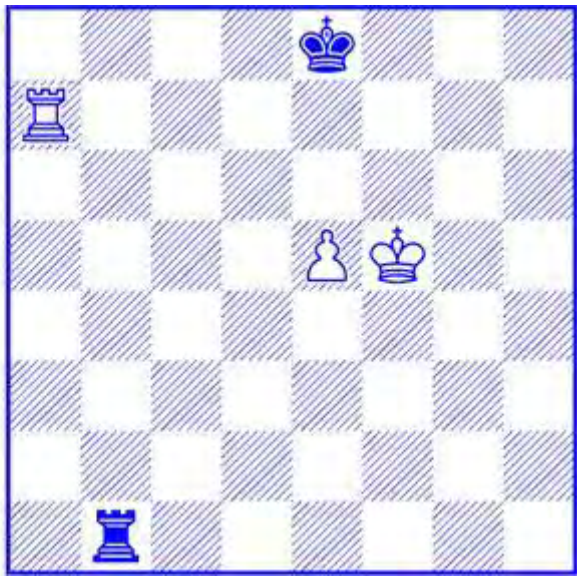


9/3
B?/Play

The Pawn on the Fifth Rank

Philidor, 1777

9-17



This is the so-called "***Philidor position***." The famous French chessplayer was the first to demonstrate, as early as the 18th century, the correct method of defense.

1…Rb6! (preventing a penetration of the white king to the sixth rank) **2 e6 Rb1**=

If the pawn stood at e5, the white king would have had a ***refuge*** from vertical checks. But, as

soon as the pawn has stepped forward, the refuge does not exist anymore.

If White is to move in the initial position, it was once thought that **1 Kf6** leads to a win as in the line 1…Rf1+ 2 Ke6 Kf8 3 Ra8+ Kg7 4 Ke7 Rb1 5 e6 (we know this position already: see diagram 9-8)

5…Rb7+ 6 Kd6 Rb6+ 7 Kd7 Rb7+ 8 Kc6+–.

It was only in the 20th century that ***a second defensive method*** in the Philidor position was discovered: ***an attack from the rear*** that helps Black to hold as well. ***If the rook fails to occupy the sixth rank "à la Philidor," it must be placed in the rear of the white pawn.***

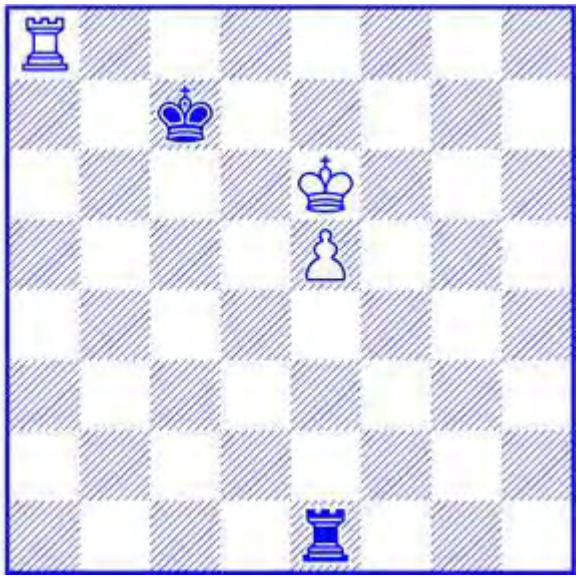
1…Re1! 2 Ke6 Kf8! 3 Ra8+ Kg7

Now we can evaluate the position of the black rook. It prevents both 4 Ke7 and 4 Kd7. In addition, Black can meet 4 Kd6 with 4…Kf7!, and White must retrace his steps: 5 Ra7+ Ke8 6 Ke6 Kf8! etc. If he tries 4 Re8, preparing 5 Kd7, the black rook occupies the long side: 4…Ra1!=.

The move 2…Kf8! is undoubtedly correct (the king goes to the short side, leaving the long side for the rook), but 2…Kd8?! 3 Ra8+ Kc7 does not lose either.

9-18

W

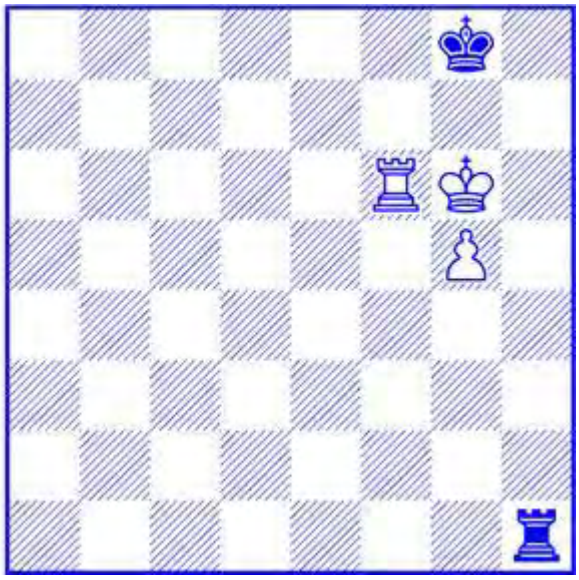


4 Re8 (4 Kf6 Kd7!) 4…Rh1! (rather than 4…Re2? 5 Kf7 Rh2 6 Rg8! Rh7+ 7 Rg7 Rh8 8 Ke7 Kc6 9 e6 Kc7 10 Rg1+–) 5 Rg8 Re1! 6 Rg2 Kd8=.

Obviously, such a defense with the king on the long side would have been impossible if the short side were even shorter (in case of an f- or g-pawn).

9-19

B



In this position, the attack from the rear does not work anymore: **1…Rg1? 2 Ra6 Kf8** (2…Rf1 3 Ra8+ Rf8 4 R×f8+ K×f8 5 Kh7+–) **3 Ra8+ Ke7 4 Rg8!** (White prepares 5 Kh7!; the black rook will be unable to disturb the king from the side) **4…Rg2 5 Kh7! Kf7 6 g6+ Ke7 7 Ra8 Rh2+ 8**

Kg8 Rg2 9 g7+–

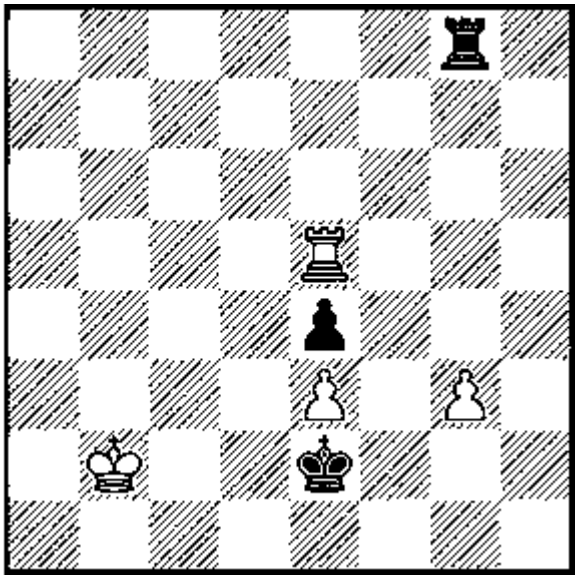
But this position is also drawn. Black's rook comes in time for a passive defense along the eighth rank: 1…Ra1! 2 Rb6 Ra8=.

Tragicomedies

Lobron – Knaak
Baden Baden 1992

9-20

B?



1…K×e3? 2 Kc2 R×g3 3 Re8 Rg2+

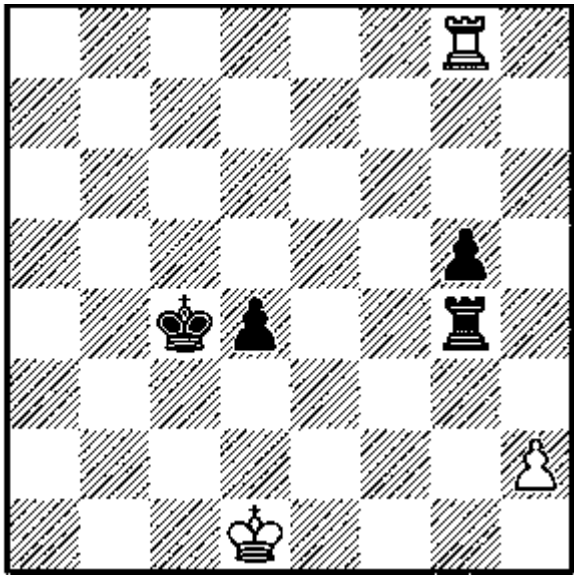
Draw, according to the second defensive method in the Philidor position.

To avoid the theoretical draw, Black should have played 1…Kd3!. The white king is placed at the long side, and one cannot see how White can survive, for example 2 Rd5+ K×e3 3 Kc2 Ke2!? (3…R×g3 4 Re5!? Kf4 5 Re8 Rd3!–+, or 5 Rd5 Kf3 6 Re5 e3 7 Kd3 Kf2–+ is also playable) 4 Rd2+ Kf3 5 Rd7, and now either 5…Rf8!? 6 Kd1 Kf2! 7 Rd2+ Kf1–+ or 5…R×g3 6 Re7 e3 7 Kd3 Kf2–+ followed by Rf3-f8.

Dreev – Beliavsky
USSR ch, Odessa 1989

9-21

W



White is in a precarious situation: 1…Kd3 is threatened. Dreev tries his last chance.

1 h4! R×h4?? 2 R×g5 Kc3 3 Rd5!= Rh1+ 4 Ke2 Rh2+ 5 Kd1 Kd3 6 Kc1 Rh1+ 7 Kb2 Re1 8 Rd8 Re4 9 Kc1 Ke2 10 Kc2 Draw.

Black should have given a rook check and moved his pawn to g4. Later on, he could either trade

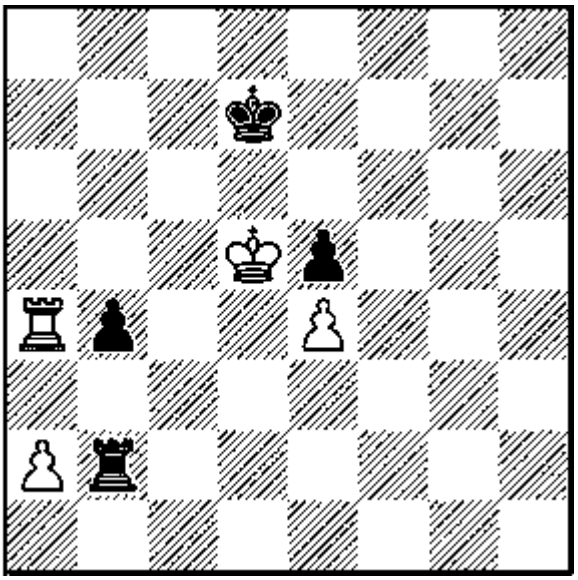
kingside pawns, under more favorable circumstances than has actually happened, or move his king to the g-pawn. The eventual consequences of 1…Rg1+! were:

2 Kd2 Rg2+ 3 Ke1 g4 4 Kf1 (4 h5 Kc3 5 h6 Rh2 6 Rh8 d3 7 Rc8+ Kd4 8 Rd8+ Ke3 9 Re8+ Kf3–+) 4…Rh2 5 R×g4 Kc3 6 Kg1 Rc2! 7 Rg8 (7 h5 d3–+) 7…d3 8 Rc8+ Kb2–+;

2 Ke2 d3+ 3 Kd2 (3 Kf2 d2) 3…Rg2+ 4 Kd1 g4 5 h5 Rh2 6 Rc8+ (6 R×g4+ Kc3–+) 6…Kd4 etc.

Larsen – Tal
Bled cmsf (9) 1965

9-22



W

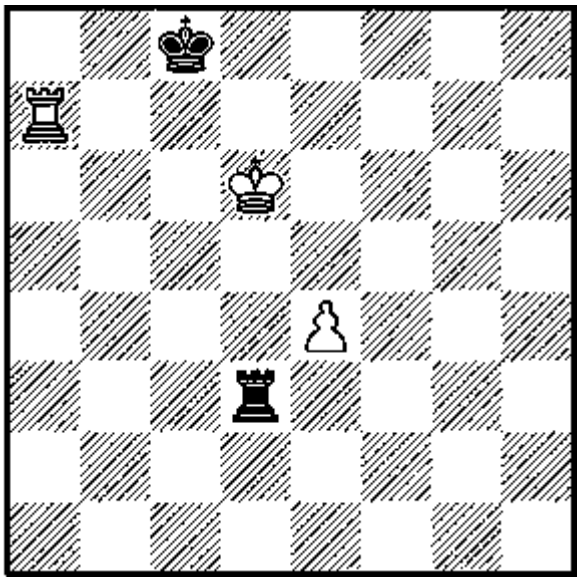
The queenside pawns will inevitably be traded, and the Philidor position will probably occur thereafter.

1 Ra7+ Kc8?

The black king goes the wrong way: he should have tried for the short side. After 1…Ke8! 2 Ke6 Kf8 3 Ra8+ Kg7 4 K×e5 b3 5 ab R×b3, the draw is obvious.

2 K×e5 b3? (as Müller indicates, after 2…Rh2 the position is still drawn) **3 ab R×b3 4 Kd6 Rd3+**

9-23



W?

5 Ke6?

Larsen misses his chance to punish his opponent for a grave positional error and allows him to employ the second defensive method in the Philidor position. The winning continuation was 5 Ke7! Rh3 6 Ra4 (△ Rc4+; Rd4) 6…Rh7+ 7 Ke8 Rh8+ 8 Kf7+–.

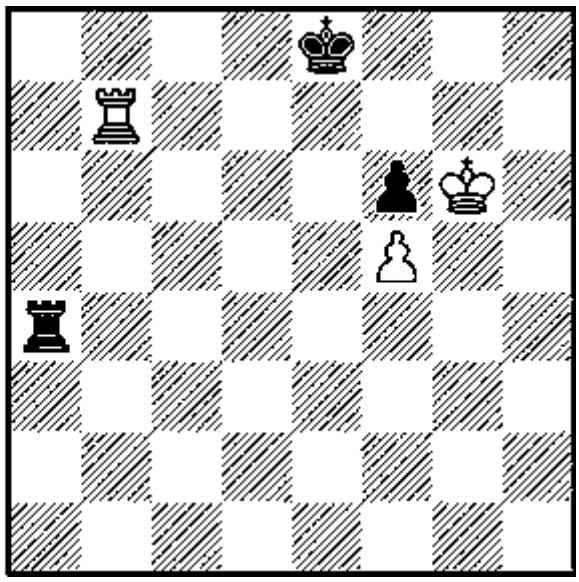
5…Rh3 6 Ra8+ (6 Ra4 Kd8!) **6…Kc7 7 Rf8 Re3! 8 e5 Re1 9 Re8** (9 Kf6 Kd7!) **9…Rh1! 10**

Ra8 Re1!

White played 18 more moves before he agreed to a peaceful outcome of the game; its result was vitally important for both rivals.

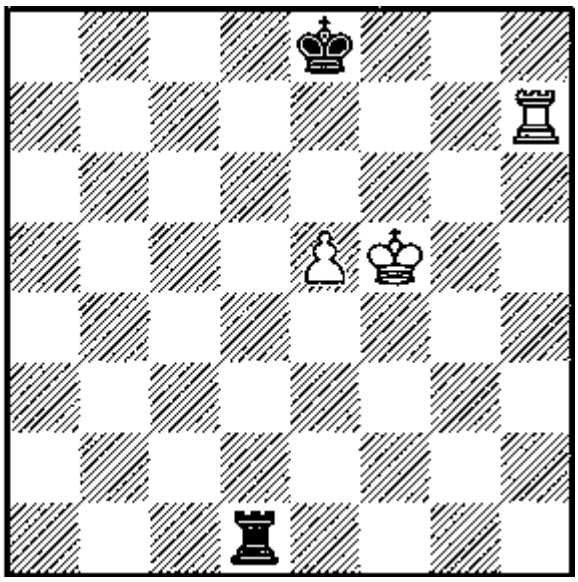
Exercises

9-24



9/4
B?

9-25



9/5
W?/Play

The Umbrella

Let us refresh our memory about the methods we have already seen of sheltering the king from rook checks.

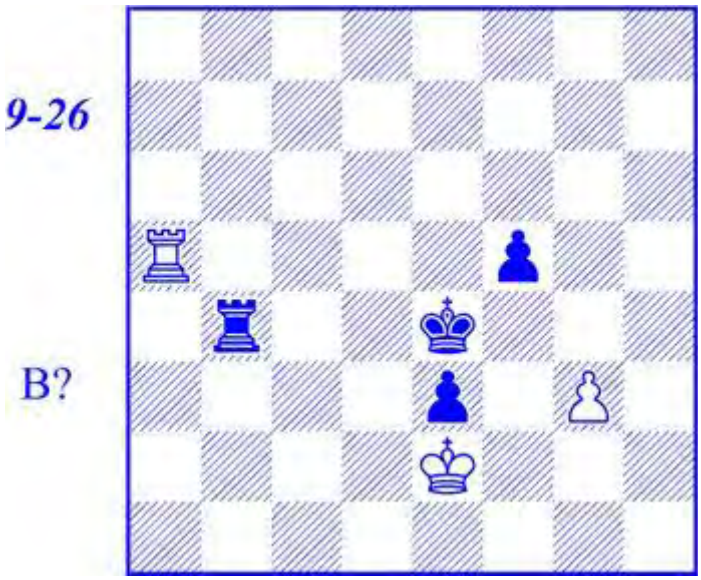
(1) The king approaches the rook – an effective method when the rook is not too far away from the king and the pawn.

(2) “Bridge” – the rook gives protection to the king.

(3) “Refuge” – the king hides behind its own pawn.

It is a good time to show one more method. Sometimes an enemy pawn can serve as a sort of umbrella that protects the king from checks, as in the next diagram.

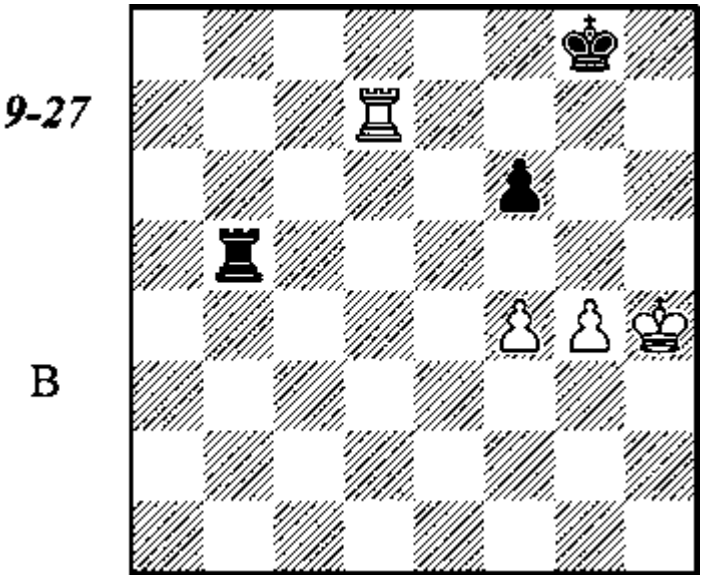
Velicka – Polak
Czech ch tt 1995



1…f4! 2 gf Rb2+ 3 Kf1 Kf3–+
White's own f4-pawn prevents him from saving himself with a check on f5.
4 Ra1 Rh2 5 Kg1 Rg2+ 6 Kh1 Rg8 7 Kh2 e2 8 f5 Kf2 9 Kh3 Rg5! White resigned.

Tragicomedies

A. Zaitsev – Hübner
Büsum 1969



The game continued **1…Rb1?? 2 Kh5 Rg1** (otherwise 3 Kg6) **3 g5 fg 4 f5! Kf8 5 f6** Black resigned.

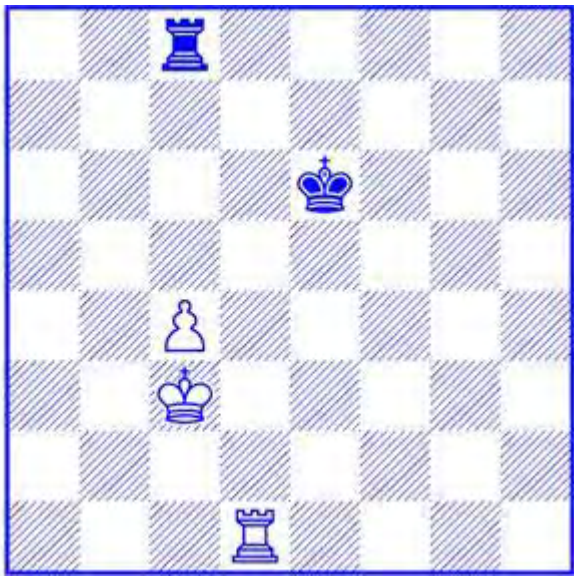
A draw could have been achieved with 1…Rb4 2 f5 Rb1! 3 Kh5 Rg1!. The waiting tactic with 1…Ra5 was quite good too: after 2 g5 (2 f5 Ra1!) 2…fg+ 3 fg, Black could defend the position either in the Philidor method (3…Ra6) or passively (3…Ra8).

The Pawn Has Not Crossed the Mid-line

In this section, we shall learn one more defensive method, the one that is called "***the frontal attack***."

If, for example, the white pawn stands on b5, it makes no sense for Black to keep his rook on b8 because it is too close to the pawn. However when the pawn has not crossed the middle line, such a rook position is justified, because the rook and the pawn are separated by no less than three rows, and therefore pursuing the king by the rook gives chances for a draw.

9-28



W

This is a typical case of an easy draw due to a frontal attack.

1 Kb4 (△ 2 c5+–) **1…Rb8+ 2 Ka5 Rc8!**

2…Ra8+? is erroneous in view of 3 Kb6+–.

3 Kb5 Rb8+ 4 Ka6 Rc8 5 Rd4 Ke5 6 Rh4 Kd6=

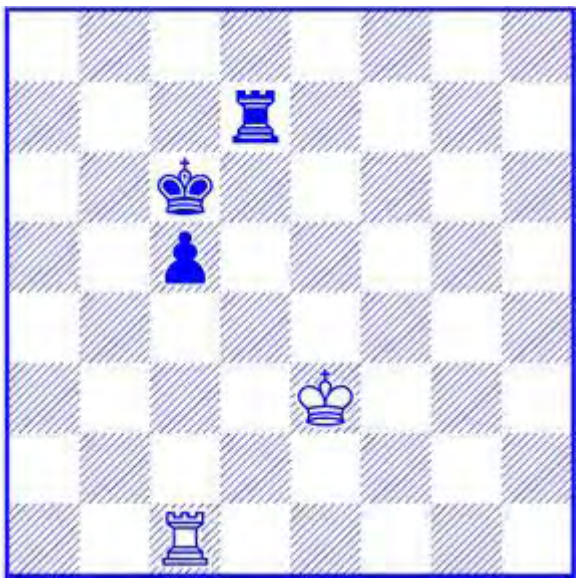
In the initial position, the rook is placed best at c8 where it prevents a pawn advance. However Black holds with a rook at h8, too. He meets 1 c5 with either 1…Ke7 2 Kc4 Rd8= or 1…Rh4 (cutting the king off the pawn) 2 c6 Ke7 3 c7 Rh8=. ***Horizontally cutting the king off from the pawn is a useful defensive method.***

Another important tip: ***in this sort of position, the black king should stay on the fifth or sixth rank.*** If he does not Black usually loses.

Kochiev – Smyslov

L'vov zt 1978

9-29



W

Both 1 Ke4 and 1 Rh1 might lead to a draw. However White carelessly moved the king away from a safe place.

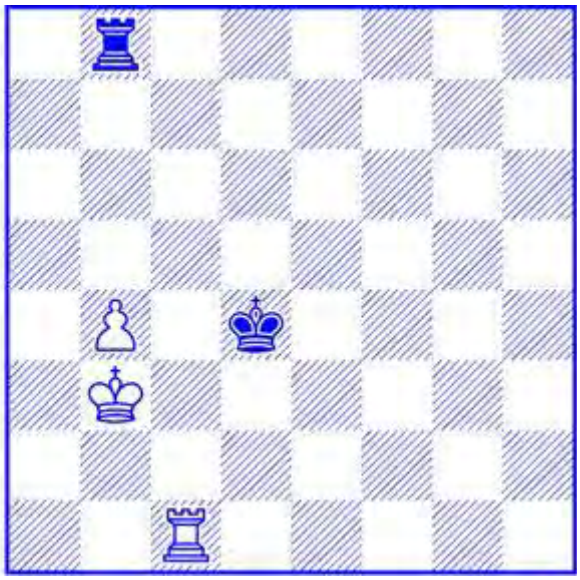
1 Ke2?? Kb5 2 Rb1+ Ka4 3 Rc1 Kb4 4 Rb1+ Ka3! 5 Rc1 Rd5!

First of all, Smyslov has optimally activated his king (an ideal place for the king is two squares diagonally from the pawn), and now he protects the pawn with the rook. Were the white king at e3, he could attack the rook immediately, while now White cannot do it in time.

6 Ke3 Kb2 7 Rc4 (7 Ke4 Rd4+) **7…Kb3**

White resigned. The pawn crosses the middle of the board and, with the white king on the long side, the position is lost.

9-30



With Black on move, this is a draw: 1…Kd5! 2 Rc4!? Kd6! 3 Ka4 Kd5!.

White, if on move, wins.

1 Rc6

1 Rc5 △ 2 Rh5, 3 b5 is no less strong.

1…Kd5 2 Ra6 Rb7 (or 2…Kd4) **3 Ka4 Kc4 4 Rc6+ Kd5 5 b5**+–

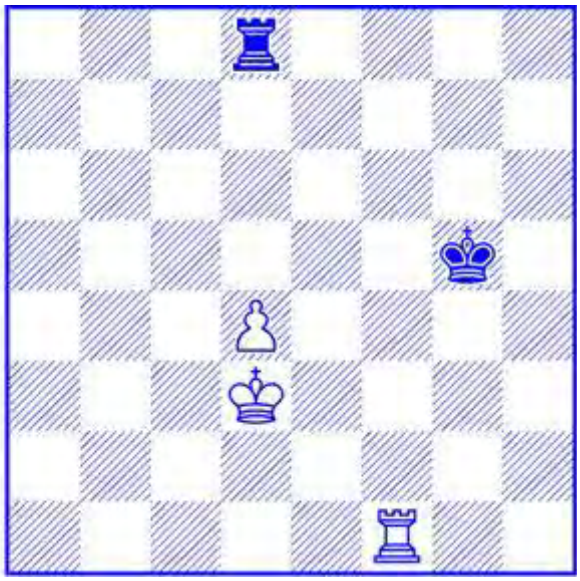
Conclusion: ***cutting off the king of the weaker side along a rank can often be more effective than the same procedure along a file.***

Now let us discuss situations with the black king being cut off from the pawn by more than one file.

A. Chéron, 1923

9-31

W



1 Kc4 Rc8+ 2 Kb5 Rd8 3 Kc5 Rc8+ 4 Kb6! Rd8

White has placed his king at its most active position. Now it is time to protect the pawn with the rook. Unlike the Kochiev-Smyslov endgame, he cannot do it horizontally. However the rook can be placed behind the pawn here, because the black king fails to help his rook in time.

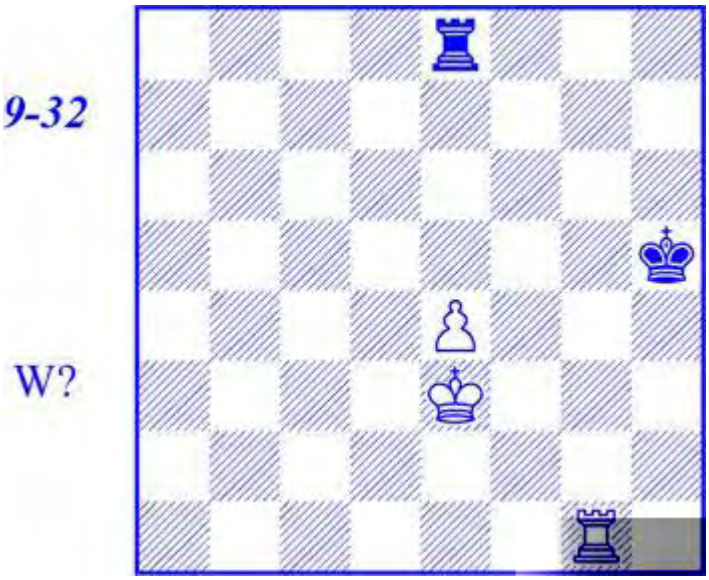
5 Rd1! Kf6 6 Kc7 Rd5 7 Kc6 Ra5

7…Rd8 8 d5 is also hopeless.

8 Re1!

It is important to cut off the king from the pawn again. Now Black loses in view of the unlucky distribution of his pieces: the king stands at the long side while the rook is at the short one. For example, 8…Ra6+ 9 Kb5 Rd6 10 Kc5 Rd8(a6) 11 d5 etc.

A. Chéron, 1926*



The method that was applied in the previous example does not work here. After 1 Kd4 Rd8+ 2 Kc5 Re8 3 Kd5 Rd8+ 4 Kc6 Re8 5 Re1? Kg6 6 Kd7 Ra8 (or 6…Re5 7 Kd6 Ra5) Black's rook occupies the long side with an obvious draw.

The winning idea is to create mate threats against the black king which is pressed to the edge of the board. Its current position on h5 is optimally suited for defense. Therefore White, utilizing zugzwang, must drive it away from h5.

1 Rg2! Kh4! 2 Rg7

2 e5? R×e5+ 3 Kf4 is premature in view of 3…Kh3!=. 2 Rg6 Kh5 3 Rd6? Kg5 4 Kd4 Ra8= also brings nothing.

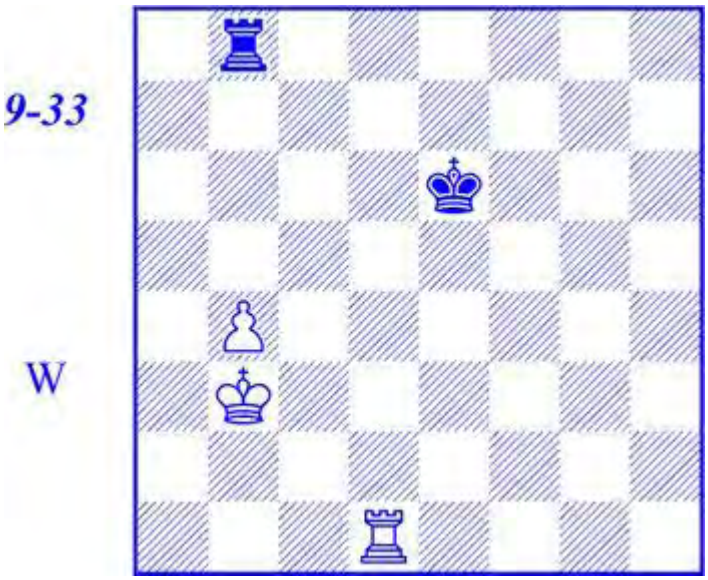
2…Kh5 3 Rg1!⊙ Kh6

Now 3…Kh4 loses to 4 e5! R×e5+ 5 Kf4. The idea of cutting off the white king along the rank also does not help: 3…Ra8 4 e5 Ra4 5 e6 Kh6 (5…Ra6 6 Kf4 R×e6 7 Kf5+–) 6 e7 Ra8 7 Kf4 Re8 8 Kf5 R×e7 9 Kf6+–.

4 Kd4 Rd8+ 5 Kc5 Re8 6 Kd5 Rd8+ 7 Ke6! Re8+ 8 Kf6!+–.

It is important to remember that ***in case of a knight pawn, cutting off the king by two files is not sufficient for a win.***

A. Chéron, 1923



1 Rd4

After 1 Ka4 Ra8+ 2 Kb5 Rb8+ 3 Ka5 Ra8+ 4 Kb6 Rb8+, the king can avoid checks only by

returning to b3. The edge of the board is too close, and there is no comfortable square two steps away from the pawn diagonally.

1…Ke5! 2 Kc3

If 2 Rd7, 2…Ke6! 3 Ra7 Kd6 4 Ka4 Kc6= follows.

2…Rh8

Another method of defense also deserves attention: 2…Rc8+ 3 Rc4 (3 Kd3 Rb8) 3…Rb8 4 Rc6 Kd5 5 Ra6 (a similar position with the king on b3 would have been winning) 5…Rc8+ 6 Kb3 Rc6! 7 Ra7 Rb6= (△ 8…Kc6).

3 Rd7

3 b5 Rb8! 4 Rh4 Kd6! 5 Kb4 Kc7=.

3…Ke6!=

It should be mentioned that 3…Rb8? loses to 4 Kc4 Ke6 5 Ra7 (5 Rd4+–) 5…Kd6 6 b5 Rc8+ 7 Kb4 Rc7 8 b6. The continuation 3…Rc8+? occurred in Dolmatov-Sorm (Lugano 1986). White won after 4 Kb3 Ke6 5 Rd4 Ke5 6 Rc4 Rb8 7 Rc6 Kd5 8 Ra6.

Until now, we have only considered positions with the pawn on fourth rank. The cases of a less advanced pawn are much more complicated, and they occur much less often, therefore we shall not investigate them. I wish only to mention that the distance between the pawn and the hostile rook is longer when the pawn stands on the second or third rank, and the defending resources are naturally more significant. Therefore, for example, if the pawn stands on the third rank, the king should be cut off by three files for a win (with only two files it is a draw if, of course, Black's king and rook are placed "in accordance with the rules").

It deserves to be mentioned that a frontal attack is particularly effective against a rook pawn. For example, with a pawn on a4, even cutting the king off by three files is not sufficient for a win.

Tragicomedies

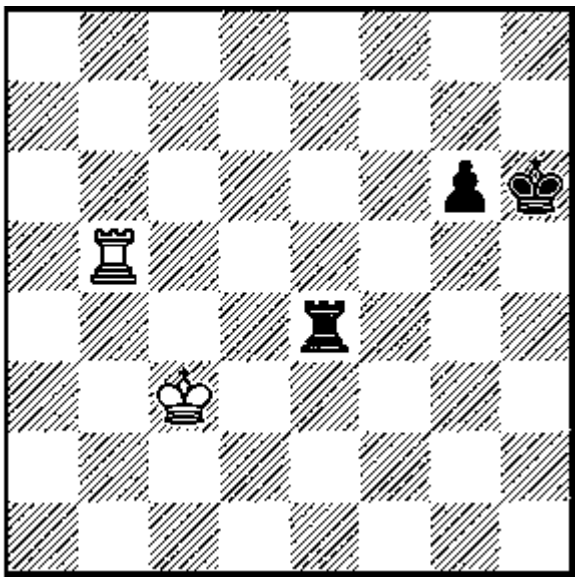
We have seen a tragicomedy in a game by Kochiev in which his grave error had fatal consequences. A draw would have maintained excellent chances for his qualifying for the Interzonal tournament. After losing, he failed to qualify, and the whole career of this young talented grandmaster declined steeply thereafter.

Many have erred in similar situations, even the greats of this world.

Tal – I. Zaitsev
USSR ch tt, Riga 1968

9-34

W?



White should play Kd3 and Rb1, but which order of moves is correct?

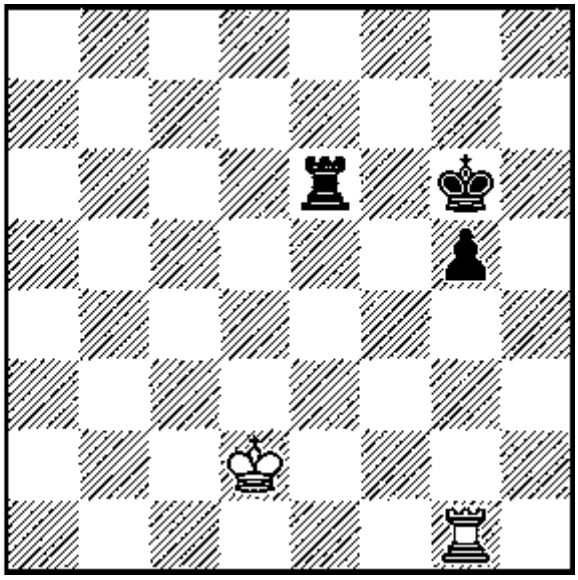
A theoretical draw can be achieved after 1 Rb1! g5 2 Kd3 Re5 3 Kd4 Re8 4 Rg1 Kg6 5 Kd3 (see the previous diagram).

However **1 Kd3?? Re1!** occurred; the game was adjourned here, and White resigned without further play. In order to bring the rook to the first rank, White must attack the black rook with his king, but we know that a king is placed badly on the second rank. Here are the eventual consequences if the game were continued:

2 Kd2 Re6 3 Rb1 g5 4 Rg1 (4 Kd3 g4 5 Rb5 g3 6 Kd2 g2 7 Rb1 Rg6 8 Rg1 Kh5 9 Ke3 Kh4–+) **4…Kh5!** (△ 5…g4)

It is useful to improve the king's position by bringing it from h6 to g6. A premature 4…Re5? misses the win: 5 Kd3 Kh5 6 Kd4 Re2 7 Kd3 Rh2 8 Ke3=.

5 Rh1+ Kg6 6 Rg1 (6 Re1 R×e1 7 K×e1 Kh5 8 Kf1 Kh4!–+)



6…Re5! 7 Kd3 Kf5! 8 Kd4

After 8 Rf1+ Kg4 9 Kd4 (9 Rg1+ Kf3 10 Kd4 Ra5–+) both 9…Ra5 10 Ke3 Ra3+ 11 Ke2 Ra2+ 12 Ke3 Kh3–+ and 9…Re2 10 Kd3 Rh2 (10…Rg2) are strong.

8…Re4+ 9 Kd3 g4 10 Rf1+

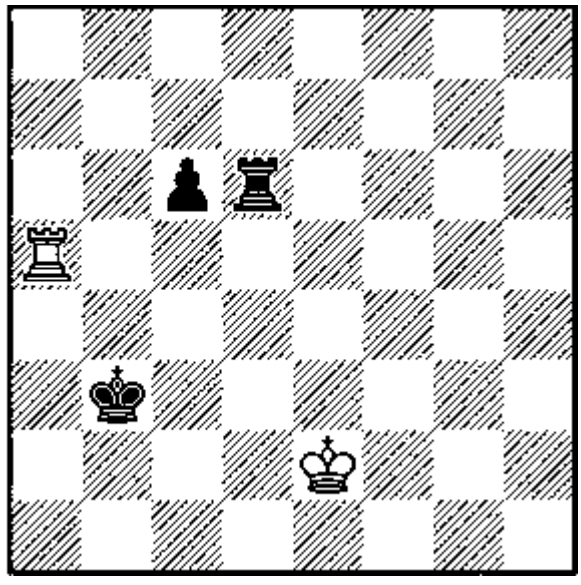
10 Rg2 Rf4 11 Ke2 Kg5 12 Rf2 (12 Rg1 Kh4) 12…g3! leads to the same result.

10…Rf4 11 Ke2

11 Rg1 Kg5 12 Ke2 Kh4.

11…g3! 12 R×f4+ K×f4 13 Ke1 Ke3! 14 Kf1 Kf3⊙–+.

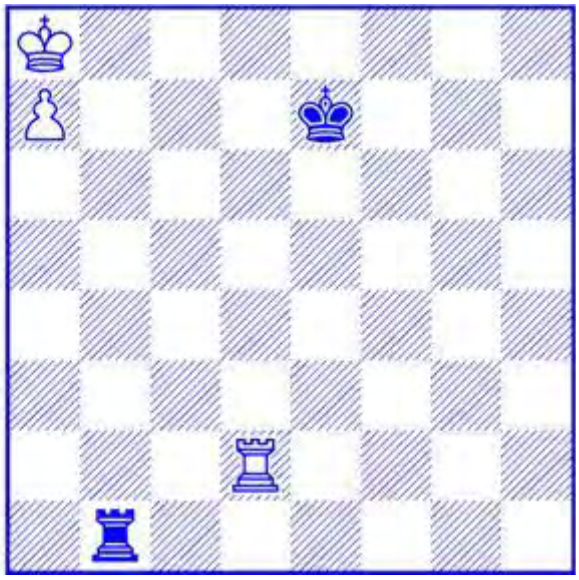
Exercises



A Rook and a Rook's Pawn vs. a Rook

The King Is in Front of Its Own Pawn

9-37



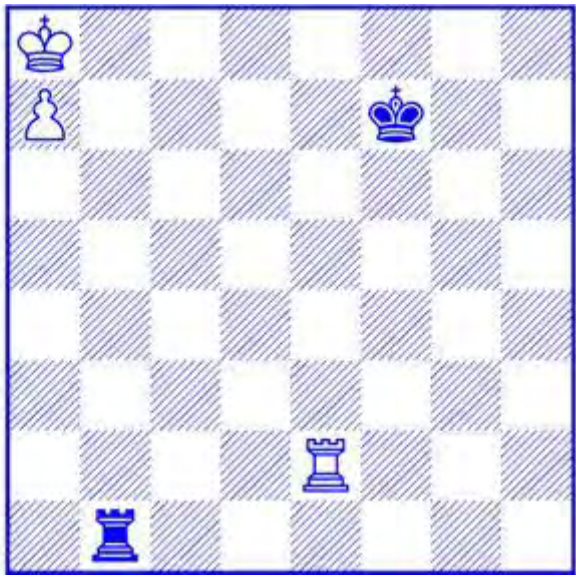
W

A draw is inevitable. The only possible attempt to free the king from custody is the transfer of the rook to b8, but then Black's king will stand in for the black rook on guard.

1 Rh2 Kd7 2 Rh8 Kc7 3 Rb8 Rc1 (or 3…Rh1 4 Rb7+ Kc8 5 Rb2 Rc1) **4 Rb2 Rc3**, and White cannot make progress.

Let us move the black king and the white rook one file away, as in the next diagram.

9-38



W

White wins, because the black king fails to reach c7 in time.

1 Rh2 Ke7 2 Rh8 Kd6

If 2…Kd7, then 3 Rb8 Ra1 4 Kb7 Rb1+ 5 Ka6 Ra1+ 6 Kb6 Rb1+ 7 Kc5. With Black's king on d6, the c5-square is not available for escaping, so White must find another itinerary.

3 Rb8 Ra1 4 Kb7 Rb1+ 5 Kc8 Rc1+ 6 Kd8 Rh1 7 Rb6+ Kc5

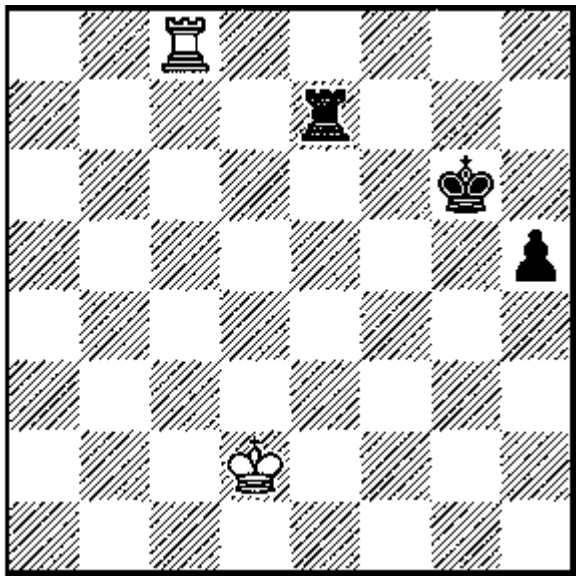
Both 8 Re6? Ra1 and 8 Ra6? Rh8+ 9 Kd7 Rh7+ 10 Ke8 Rh8+ 11 Kf7 Ra8 are useless now.

8 Rc6+! Kb5 (8…Kd5 9 Ra6 Rh8+ 10 Kc7 Rh7+ 11 Kb6) **9 Rc8 Rh8+ 10 Kc7 Rh7+ 11 Kb8**+–.

Tragicomedies

Vladimirov – Rashkovsky
USSR chsf, Chelyabinsk 1975

9-39



W?

To achieve a draw, White should simply force Black's king to the h-file: 1 Rg8+! Kf5 2 Rf8+ Kg4 3 Rg8+ Kh3 4 Rg5 h4 5 Rg8=.

And 1 Rc1! △ 2 Re1= is also good.

1 Rc3? h4 2 Re3?

The decisive error! It was still not too late to return to the correct plan by playing 2 Rc6+! Kg5 3 Rc8 h3 (or 3…Rh7 4 Rg8+) 4 Rh8 (4 Rg8+) 4…Kg4 5 Rg8+ Kf3 6 Rf8+ Kg2 7 Rg8+ Kh1 8 Rg6 h2 9 Rg8=.

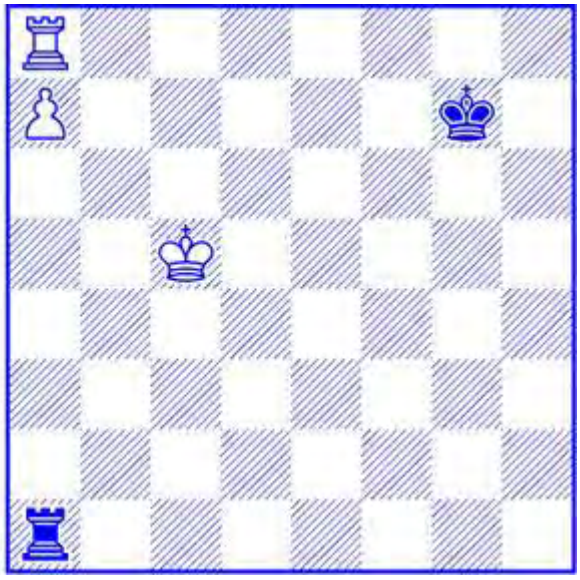
2…Rh7! 3 Re1 (3 Rh3 Kg5 4 Ke2 Kg4 is also bad) **3…h3 4 Rh1 Kg5 5 Ke3 Kh4 6 Kf2 Rf7+ 7 Kg1** (7 Ke2 Ra7, planning 8…Ra2+ and 9…h2) **7…Ra7** White resigned.

If 8 Rh2, then 8…Ra1+ (but, of course, not 8…Kg3?? 9 Rg2+!) 9 Kf2 Kg4⊙ is decisive.

A similar position (like diagram 9-39, but with the white rook on d4 plus reversed wings and colors) occurred in Dvoiris-Kovalev, USSR ch(1), Simferopol 1988. Curiously enough, Kovalev lost precisely in the same way as Vladimirov: 1 Rd3? h4 2 Re3?.

The Rook Is in Front of the Pawn and the Pawn Is on the Seventh Rank

9-40



A standard defensive formation: Black's rook is behind the hostile pawn, while the king is placed on g7 or h7. White's rook is riveted to the pawn and cannot leave a8. If **1 Kb6**, then **1…Rb1+**. The white king cannot escape from vertical checks. Black's rook drives the king away and returns to a1.

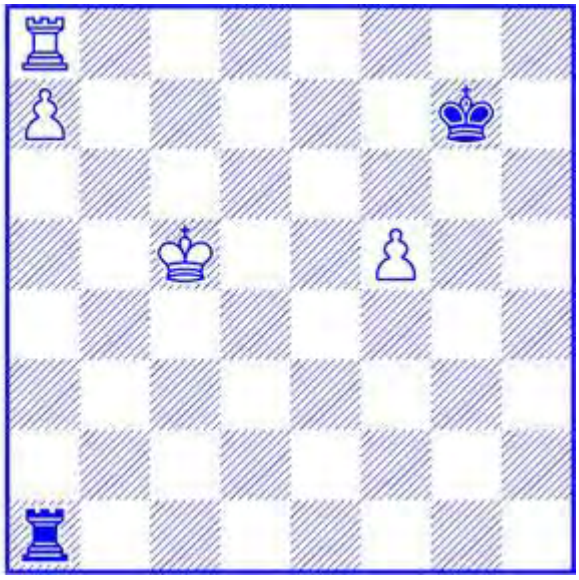
Other defensive systems occur much less frequently. The black king can hide in the "shadow" of his opponent, or (with the black rook on the seventh rank) in the "shadow" of his own rook. We just mention these ideas but do not study them here. Sometimes they are sufficient for a draw, and

sometimes not. For example, if we move the black king from g7 to c3, the move 1 Rc8! wins. A drawn position is one with the white king on c7 and the black king on c5.

Back to the last diagram; let's add a white pawn on h5. For the outcome, there will be no change: Black simply ignores its existence. The same is valid for a g5-pawn and even for two or three white pawns on the g-file.

However an f5-pawn wins.

9-41



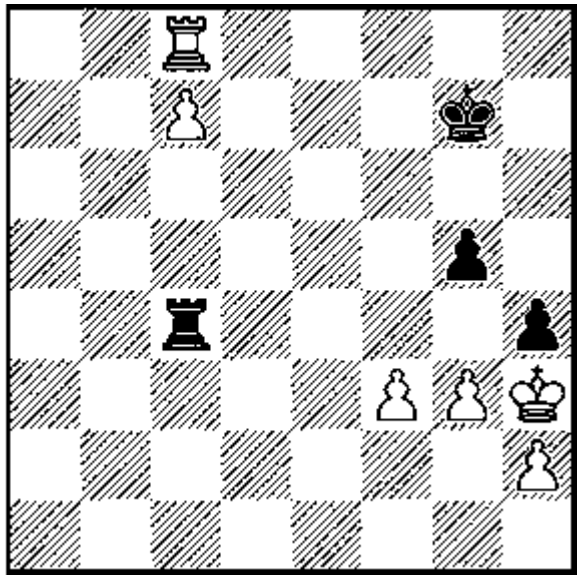
W

1 f6+ Kf7 (1…K×f6 2 Rf8+; 1…Kh7 2 f7) **2 Rh8,** and Black loses his rook.

Tragicomedies

Khaunin – Fridman
Leningrad 1962

9-42



B

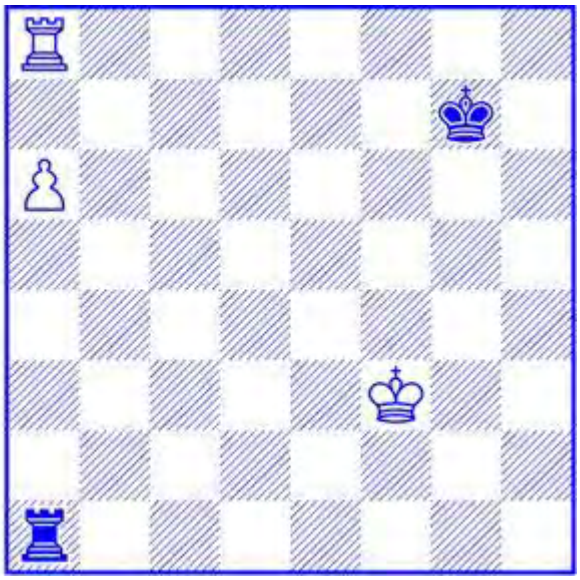
1…hg 2 hg? g4+! 3 fg. A draw is inevitable, as White has only g-pawns (regardless of whether one or two).

The winning continuation was 2 K×g3! Kh7 3 h4! gh+ 4 Kh3 Kg7 5 f4, and the f-pawn goes ahead with decisive effect.

The Rook Is in Front of the Pawn and the Pawn Is on the Sixth Rank

J. Vancura, 1924*

9-43



B

The main difference between this position and those discussed above, is the fact that here White's king has a refuge from vertical checks: the a7-square. The king hides there in order to free his rook from the job of protecting the pawn.

The black king, in contrast, fails to reach the queenside: 1…Kf7? 2 Ke4 (2 a7? Kg7 would have been premature) 2…Ke7 3 a7! Kd7(f7) 4 Rh8+–.

2…Ra5 (instead of 2…Ke7) is also hopeless: 3 Kd4 Kg7 4 Kc4 Kf7 5 Kb4 Ra1 6 Kb5 Rb1+ 7 Kc6 Ra1 8 Kb7 Rb1+ 9 Ka7 Ke7 10 Rb8 Rc1!? 11 Kb7 (rather than 11 Rb6? Kd7) 11…Rb1+ 12 Ka8 Ra1 13 a7+–. Black's king fails to reach c7 in time (see diagram 9-38).

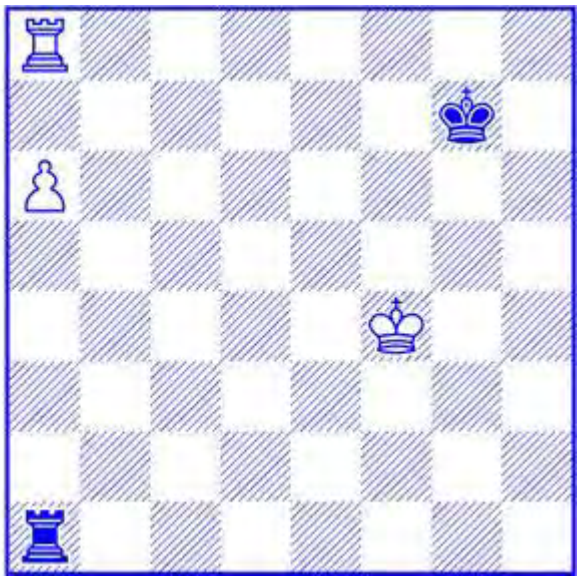
Because of this analysis, the diagrammed position had been considered winning for a long time. However a saving plan was finally discovered. This plan is based on the fact that the a6-pawn gives the king a refuge from vertical checks, but cannot hide him from side checks. Therefore Black should bring his rook to f6.

1…Rf1+! 2 Ke4 Rf6!. This is the so-called ***"Vancura position."*** Black follows the same "pawn in the crosshairs" method found in endings with bishops of opposite colors. The rook attacks the pawn in order to prevent the enemy's rook from leaving a8. What can White do? If a6-a7, Black always has Ra6 (his king will obviously never leave the g7- and h7-squares). If White defends the pawn with his king, a series of checks follows, and then the rook returns to f6. For example, **3 Kd5 Rb6 4 Kc5 Rf6!** (the best place for the rook!) **5 Kb5 Rf5+!**, etc.

Now let us move the white king to f4.

P. Romanovsky, 1950

9-44



B

1…Rf1+? 2 Ke5 Rf6 is bad here on account of 3 Rg8+!. However, Black has no other defensive

plan than the rook transfer to the sixth rank. Therefore **1…Rc1!**

If 2 Ke5, then 2…Rc6= follows, achieving the Vancura position. White may use the opportunity for removing his rook from the corner.

2 Rb8 Ra1 3 Rb6 (3 Rb7+ Kf6 4 a7 Ke6 is weaker.)

When the rook stood on a8, the black king was riveted to the kingside; but now the time comes for a march to the pawn. But this should be done carefully: the premature 3…Kf7? 4 Ke5 Ke7 5 Rb7+ Kd8 6 a7 loses for Black.

3…Ra5! 4 Ke4 Kf7! 5 Kd4

If 5 Rh6, then 5…Kg7!, but not 5…Ke7? 6 a7 Kd7 7 Rh8!.

5…Ke7 6 Kc4 Kd7 7 Kb4 Ra1, and the draw is clear.

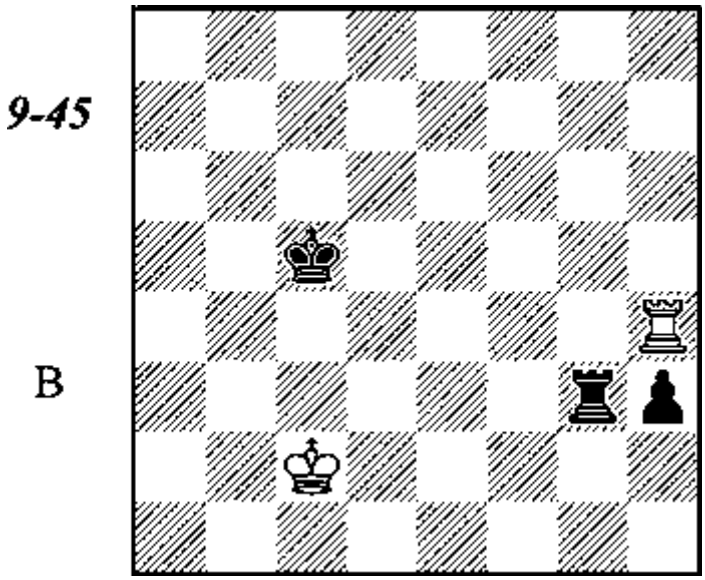
It is worth mentioning that 1…Rb1? (instead of 1…Rc1) would lose: 2 Ra7+! Kf6 (2…Kg6 3 Rb7 Ra1 4 Rb6+ Kf7 5 Ke5+–) 3 Ke4 Rb6 4 Rh7! Kg6 5 a7 Ra6 6 Rb7+–.

However the first moves might have been transposed: 1…Ra5!? 2 Ke4 Rc5! (2…Rb5!) 3 Ra7+ Kg6 4 Rb7 (4 Kd4 Rc6=) 4…Ra5=.

In many lines, the kings compete in a race to the queenside. If the white king stood closer to the pawn, then the black one would eventually arrive too late. This means that Black cannot delay the rook transfer to the sixth rank; this plan should be executed as soon as possible.

Tragicomedies

Vyzhmanavin – Lerner
USSR ch, L'vov 1984



In this drawn position, Black uses his last available trap, and unexpectedly succeeds.

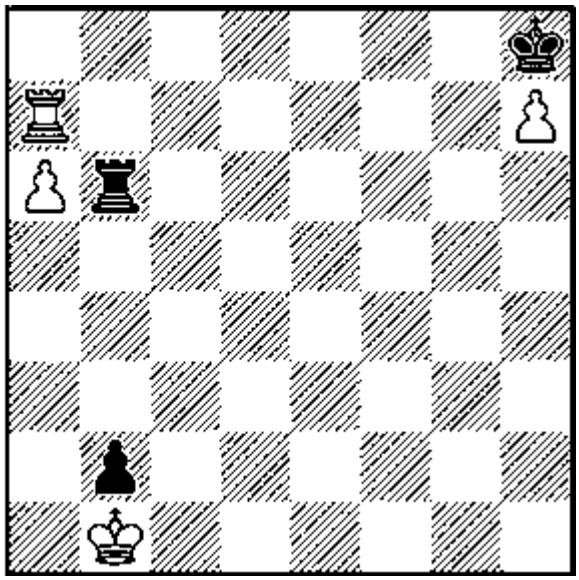
1…Ra3!? 2 Kd2??

Correct was, of course, 2 Kb2! Rf3 3 Kc2 Kd5 4 Kd2=.

2…h2! 3 Ke2 Ra1! White resigned.

Ivanchuk – Lautier
Horgen 1995

9-46



B

1…Rb4??

The Vancura position could be achieved through the elementary 1…Rf6! 2 Ra8+ (after 2 K×b2 Black's rook would become "desperado" because his king is stalemated) 2…K×h7 3 K×b2 Kg7.

2 Rc7 (2 Rb7 is also good) **2…Ra4 3 Rc8+??**

White gives his adversary a nice present: a vitally important tempo. 3 a7?? R×a7= was obviously erroneous, but the line 3 Rc6! K×h7 4 K×b2 Kg7 5 Kb3 Ra1 6 Kb4 Kf7 7 Kc5(b5) Ke7 8 Kb6 Kd7 9 Kb7 led to a win.

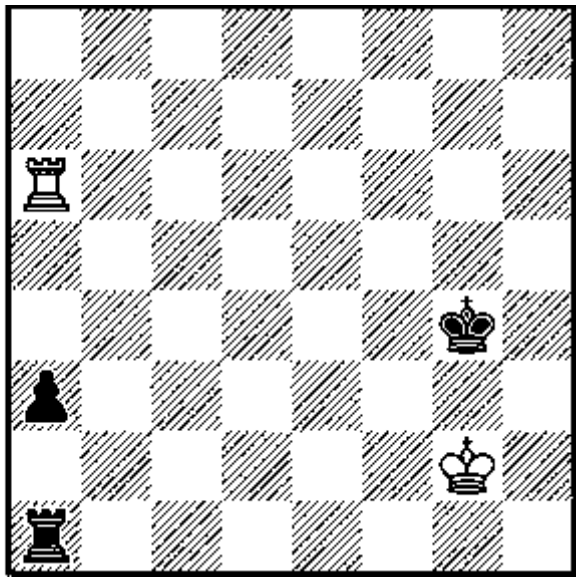
3…K×h7 4 Rc6 Rb4??

A present in return! After 4…Kg7!, Black's king could have come to the queenside in time: 5 K×b2 Kf7 6 Kb3 Ra1 7 Kb4 Ke7 8 Kb5 Kd7=.

5 a7 Ra4 6 Rc7+ Kg6 7 K×b2 Kf6 8 Kb3 Ra1 9 Kb4 Ke6 10 Kb5 (10 Kc5) **10…Kd6 11 Rc6+** (11 Rh7) **11…Kd5 12 Ra6 Rb1+ 13 Ka5 Kc5 14 Rc6+! K×c6 15 a8Q+**, and White won.

Brodsky – Khmelnitsky
Kherson 1989

9-47



W?

1 Ra4+! Kf5 2 Rc4 Ra2+ 3 Kg3 Rb2 4 Ra4 would have led to a draw.

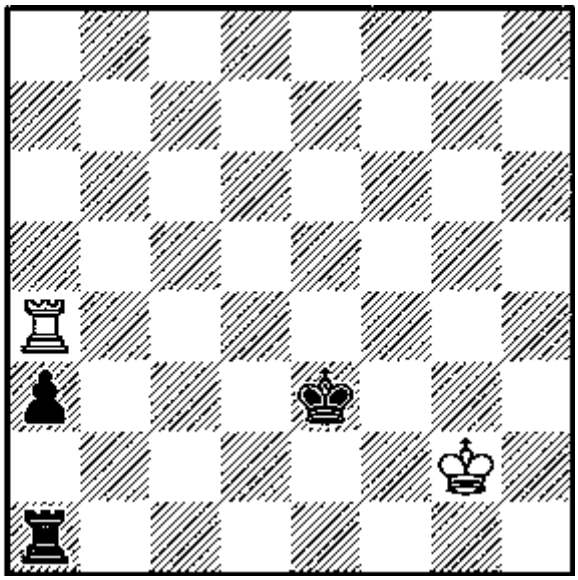
1 Rg6+? Kf4 (1…Kf5?? 2 Rg3= is the Vancura position) **2 Ra6**

White does not have 2 Rg3 on account of 2…Rg1+!. 2 Rf6+ can be met by 2…Ke4!, while 2 Rc6 - by 2…Ra2+!.

2…Ke4 3 Ra4+ Ke3?

An absurd move! If the king is going to move ahead, then why not to d3? But 3…Kd5 4 Rf4 Ra2+ 5 Kg3 Rb2 would have been a much simpler win.

9-48
$
W?



Now we have (with reversed wings and colors) the Romanovsky position (1950). Its solution is 4 Rh4!! Kd2 (4…Ra2+ 5 Kg1! Rf2 6 Ra4 Ra2 7 Rh4=) 5 Rh3! Kc2 6 Rf3! a2 7 Rf2+! (7 Ra3?? Kb2) 7…Kd3 8 Rf3+ Ke4 9 Ra3=.

4 Rg4? (a decisive error) **4…Ra2+! 5 Kh3** After 5 Kg1 Kf3! 6 Ra4 (6 Rc4 Re2), Black has a pleasant choice between 6…Ra1+ 7 Kh2 Ke2 and 6…Kg3 7 Kf1 Ra1+ 8 Ke2 a2 △ 9…Rh1.

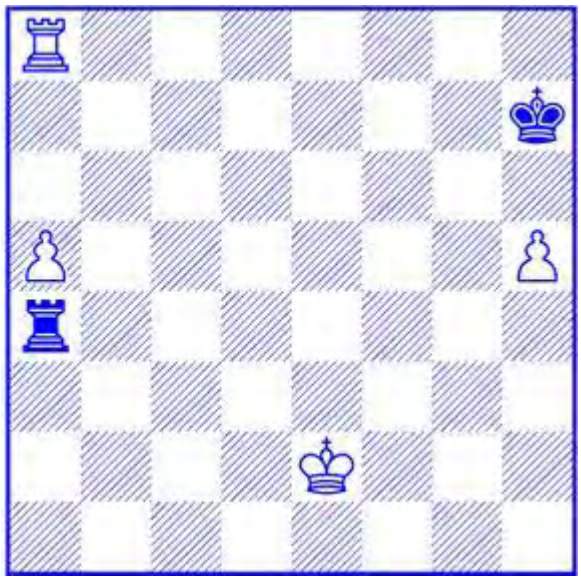
5…Rf2! 6 Ra4 a2 7 Ra3+ Kd4 8 Kg3 Rb2 9 Kf4 Rf2+

White resigned. The aim of the last check was probably to improve the rook position after 10 Kg3, bringing it to c2 first, and to push the king thereafter. However the immediate 9…Kc4 10 Ke4 Kb4 11 Ra8 Kc3–+ was sufficient for a win.

a- and h-Pawns

In the Vancura position, let us add a white pawn on the h-file. It is easy to see that the evaluation remains unchanged. The defensive method is precisely the same as before: the rook maintains the pawn in the crosshairs from the side and does not release the hostile rook from the corner.

9-49
B



1…Re4+! 2 Kd3 Re5 3 Kc4 Rf5!

The best policy is to pay no attention to the h-pawn at all. 3…R×h5? loses to 4 a6 Rh6 5 Kb5 Rh5+ 6 Kb6 Rh6+ 7 Kb7.

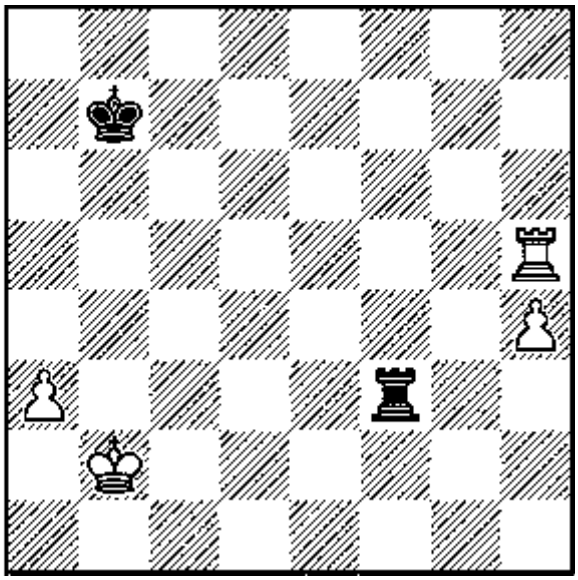
4 a6 (4 Kb4 Rf4+) **4…Rf6! 5 Kb5 Rf5+ 6 Kc6 Rf6+ 7 Kd5 Rb6**, etc.

Tragicomedies

Suetin – F. Portisch

Belgrade 1977

9-50



W?

White could move his rook to a more advantageous position: 1 Rc5! (or 1 Rb5+) 1…Kb6 2 Rc3 Rf2+ (2…Rf4 3 Rh3) 3 Kb3 (3 Rc2!? △ 4 Rh2) 3…Rh2 4 Rc4 and 5 a4 with an easy win. However Suetin does not suspect any danger of a draw.

1 a4?? Rf4!= **2 Kb3 Ka6!** (the threat was 3 Rb5+ followed by 4 h5+–) **3 a5 Re4 4 Kc3 Rf4 5 Kd3 Rg4 6 Ke3 Rc4 7 Kf3 Rc3+**

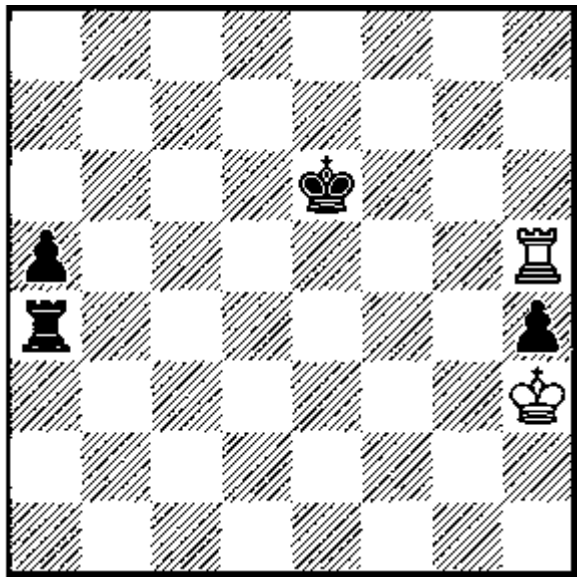
The rook is placed best on the c-file. 7…Rb4? loses to 8 Rh8 Ka7 9 h5 Rb5 10 h6+–.

8 Ke4 Rc4+ 9 Kd5 Rg4 10 Ke6 Rc4 11 Rh8 Kb7 12 Rh7+ Ka6 Draw.

Szabó – Tukmakov

Buenos Aires 1970

9-51



W

White may simply wait and maintain the a-pawn in the crosshairs. For example, 1 Rb5 Kd6 2 Rf5 Ra1 3 Kh2! a4 4 Rf4! a3 5 Rf3! Kc5 (5…a2 6 Ra3) 6 Rb3 Kc4 7 Rf3 Kb4 8 Rf4+!, etc.

Szabó, an experienced grandmaster, did not know this defensive system.

1 Kg2?! Kd6 2 Kf2?! Ra2+ 3 Ke1?

After 3 Kg1! Kc6 4 Rf5! the position was still drawn.

3…Ra1+! 4 Ke2

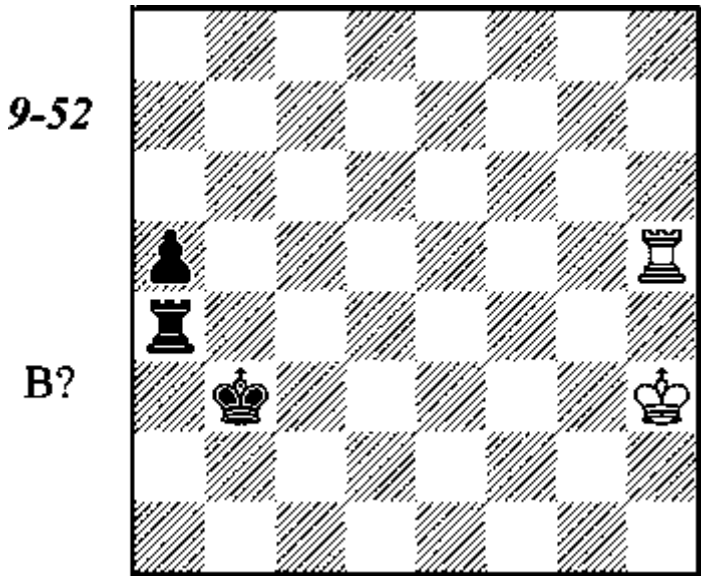
There is no salvation anymore: 4 Kf2 a4 5 R×h4 a3 6 Rh3 (6 Ra4 Kc5–+) 6…a2 7 Ra3 Rh1, or 4 Kd2 Rh1! 5 R×a5 h3 6 Rh5 h2 △ 7…Ra1–+.

4…a4 5 Rh6+ Ke5 6 Rh5+ Kf6 7 Kf2 a3 8 Kg2 Rc1 9 Ra5 Rc3 White resigned.

Twenty-three years later, precisely the same position occurred in Emms-Riemersma, Gausdal

1993. And again, White did not know the theory of this ending.

1 Rh6+?! Kd5 2 Rh5+ Kc4 3 R×h4+? (3 Rf5! Ra1 4 Kh2 a4 5 Rf4+ with a draw) **3…Kb3 4 Rh5**



4…Ra1?

White's rook is misplaced, and it is important to keep it on the h-file. Emms demonstrated that this could have been achieved by the subtle move 4…Ra3!, for example, 5 Kh2 (5 Rg5 Kb4+ 6 Kg2 Rc3 7 Rg8 a4 8 Rb8+ Kc4 9 Kf2 a3 10 Ra8 Kb3 11 Ke2 a2 12 Kd2 Rc4–+) 5…a4! 6 Rh3+ Kb2 7 Rh4 Ra2! 8 Kh1 (8 Rg4 Kb3+ 9 Kh3 Rc2–+) 8…Ra1+ 9 Kg2 a3 10 Rh3 a2–+.

5 Kg2?

An error in return. A draw was possible through 5 Rg5! a4 6 Rg3+ Kb4 (6…Kc2 7 Rg2+ Kd3 8 Rg4 a3 9 Rg3+ Kc2 10 Kh2=) 7 Rg4+ Kb5 8 Rg5+ Kc6 9 Rg6+! (the king should be driven as far away as possible; premature is 9 Rg4? a3 10 Kh2 Rb1 11 Ra4 Rb3 12 Kg2 Kb5 13 Ra8 Kb4 14 Kf2 Kc3 15 Ke2 Kb2–+, or 10 Kg2 Kb5! 11 Rg3 Kb4 12 Rg4+ Kb3 13 Rg3+ Kb2–+) 9…Kd5 10 Rg5+ Ke6 11 Kg2 Rb1 (11…a3 12 Rg3 △ Rf3=) 12 Ra5 Rb4 13 Kf2 Kd6 14 Ke2=.

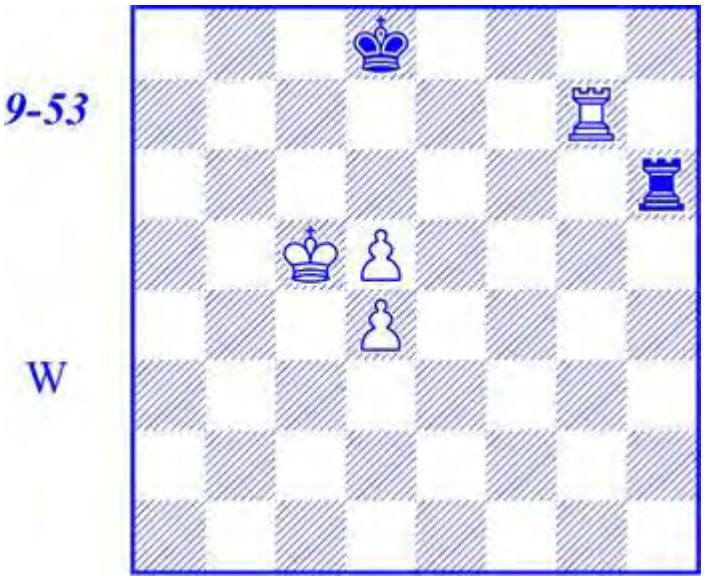
5…a4–+6 Kf2 (6 Rh3+ Kb2 7 Rh4 a3–+) **6…a3 7 Rb5+ Ka2 8 Ke2 Rb1 9 Rd5** (9 Ra5 Kb2 10 Rb5+ Ka1 11 Ra5 a2–+) **9…Kb2 10 Rd2+ Kb3 11 Rd3+ Ka4 12 Rd4+ Rb4 13 Rd8 a2 14 Kd3 Kb3** White resigned.

A Rook and Two Pawns vs. a Rook

As Tarrasch once said, ***"all rook endings are drawn."*** These endings are rife with drawish tendencies, and even as large a material advantage as two extra pawns is often not sufficient for victory.

Doubled Pawns

If the king of the weaker side stands in front of the pawns, a draw can usually be easily achieved (except for those cases when the rook must stay on the back rank in view of mate threats). The applicable ideas here are familiar to us from the Philidor position (diagram 9-17).



1 Rb7 Rg6 (1…Kc8!?) **2 Rb6 Rg4!**

Not the only move, but the safest. Black switches to the second defensive method in the Philidor position (if 3 Kc6 then 3…R×d4 4 Rb8+ Ke7=).

3 d6 Rg1!

The rook prepares itself for giving rear checks because the white king has no refuge at d6 anymore.

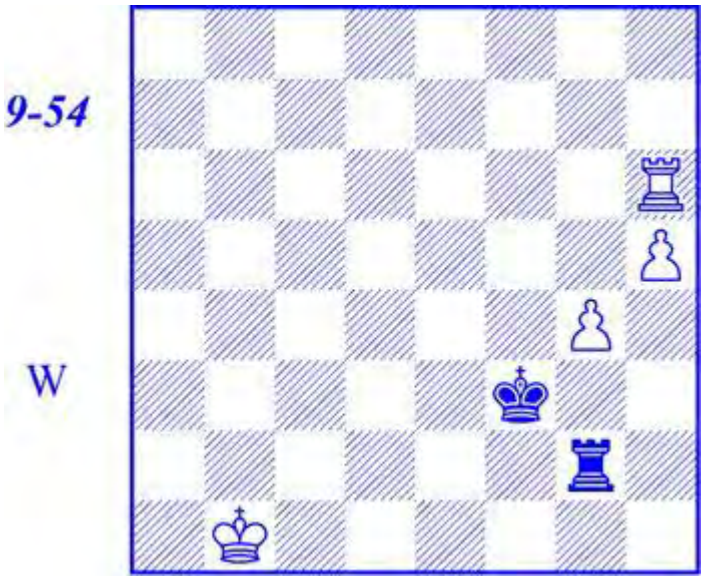
4 Kc6 Rc1+ 5 Kd5 Rh1 6 Rb8+ Kd7 7 Rb7+ Kd8 8 d7 Rh5+ (8…Ke7) **9 Kc6 Rh6+ 10 Kc5 Rh5+ 11 d5 Rh6!**=

And again, Black returns to the defensive method suggested by Philidor.

Connected Pawns

Two extra connected pawns can be most easily exploited if the king supports them. However, sometimes they can advance for queening even when a rook alone supports them, as in the next diagram.

Szabó – Keres
Moscow 1956



1 Rg6

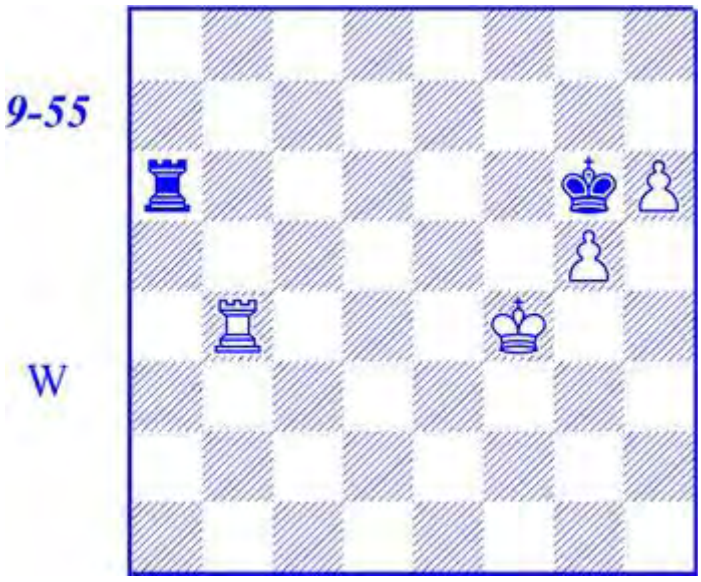
White is planning 2 h6, 3 g5, 4 Rg7, 5 h7 etc. This simple plan cannot be prevented. Such pawns are sometimes called ***"self-propelled."***

1…Ke4 2 h6 Rh2 3 g5 Kd3 4 Rg7 Kc3 5 h7 (△ g6, Rg8) **5…Kb3 6 Rb7+** Black resigned.

The best chances for a successful defense exist when the king blocks the pawns. This is perhaps

the most important drawn position:

J. Kling, B. Horwitz, 1851



1 Rd4 Rb6 2 Rd8! Rb4+ 3 Ke5 Rb7!

The most precise: Black protects the seventh rank and threatens to take the g-pawn (he cannot of course do it immediately: 3…K×g5?? 4 h7).

Erroneous is 3…Rg4? 4 Rg8+ Kh7 5 Kf5!+– (rather than 5 Rg7+?! Kh8 6 Kf5? Rf4+! – a "desperado" rook). The *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings* claims that 3…Rb5+ 4 Rd5 Rb7 5 Ke6 also loses for Black. But I do not see how White can make any progress after 5…Ra7 6 Rd7 Ra6+ 7 Rd6 (7 Ke7 K×g5 8 h7 Ra8 9 Kf7 Kh6=) 7…Ra7. 5…Rb6+ 6 Ke7 Rb7+ 7 Rd7 Rb5 (7…Rb8) 8 h7 Rb8!= is also good.

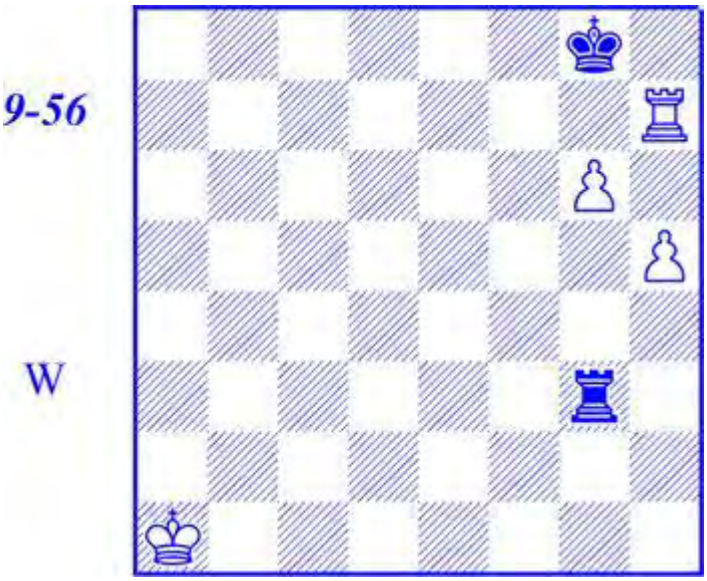
4 Rg8+ Kh7 5 Re8 Kg6

Black returns to the initial position of this ending. But he can now force a draw with 5…Rb5+ 6 Kf6 R×g5!= (or 6…Rf5+!).

6 Kf4 Rb4+ 7 Re4 Rb6=

Let us look at a more complicated but quite useful situation that can occur in a practical game.

G. Kasparian, 1946



For the time being, let us accept that White wins if he succeeds in transferring his rook to the fifth rank. This means that Black dare not play either 1…Kf8 2 Rf7+ △ Rf5 or 1…Rd3 2 Rc7 Rh3 (2…Rd5 3 h6) 3 Rc5. Therefore his rook must stay on g3 and h3. But what can Black do when the white king comes to the kingside?

It turns out to be difficult for White. If his king comes to g2 when the black rook is on h3, then 1…Ra3 is playable, because 2 Rb7 Ra5! 3 h6 Rg5+ loses a pawn; the same happens after 2 Kh2 Rb3 3 Ra7 Rb5!.

If White plays 2 Kf2 the rook goes back to h3. By the way here, as in all similar positions, 3 h6 Rh5 4 Kf3 Rg5 5 Rg7+ Kh8 6 Kf4 Rf5(g4)+! leads nowhere.

However if, with the white king on f2 and the black rook on h3, Black is on move, he comes to be in zugzwang. His rook must leave its comfortable position behind the pawns, and then the white rook has the opportunity to leave h7.

We have come to the conclusion that f2 and h3 are the squares of the reciprocal zugzwang. Obviously enough, another pair of such squares is e2 and g3. Furthermore, when the white king stands on any dark square of the second rank the black rook must be on h3 while, when the king stands on a light square, the rook must be on g3!.

1 Ka2!!

A paradoxical move that contradicts the standard approach (“first we move our king to the kingside, and only think thereafter”). It turns out that one should be thinking immediately because any other initial move misses the win.

After 1 Kb2? Rh3 2 Kc2 Rg3 3 Kd2 Rh3 4 Ke2 Rg3 5 Kf2 Rh3 White is in zugzwang: 6 Kg2 Ra3 7 Rb7 Ra5=.

If 1 Rb7?, then 1…Rg5 2 Rh7 Rg2! 3 Kb1 Rh2 4 Kc1 Rg2 5 Kd1 Rh2 6 Ke1 Rg2 7 Kf1 Rh2 (the same zugzwang position, only a rank lower) 8 Kg1 Ra2 9 Rb7 Ra5=.

In case of 1 Kb1?, 1…Rg2? is erroneous: 2 Kc1 Rh2 3 Kd1 Rg2 4 Ke1 Rh2 5 Kf1, and Black is in zugzwang: 5…Ra2 6 Rb7+–. The correct method is 1…Rb3+!. The rook gives checks until the king steps on the second rank, and then goes to a corresponding square. For example 2 Kc2 Rg3!, or 2 Kc1 Rc3+! 3 Kd2 (3 Kd1 Rd3+!) 3…Rh3! 4 Ke2 Rg3 5 Kf2 Rh3⊙=.

1…Rh3 2 Kb2 Rg3 3 Kc2 Rh3 4 Kd2 Rg3 5 Ke2 Rh3 6 Kf2⊙ Ra3 7 Rd7 Rh3 8 Rd5 Kg7 9 Kg2 Rh4 10 Kg3+–

It remains for us to prove that White wins if he succeeds in bringing his rook to the fifth rank. This fact is not quite obvious because Black blocks the pawns with his king. However his blockade is less efficient than in the Kling and Horwitz position.

1 Ka2!! Rd3 2 Rb7! (but, of course, not 2 Kb2? Rh3!⊙=) **2…Rh3**

2…Rg3 can be met by 3 Kb2 Rg5 4 Rh7 Rg3 5 Kc2, and it is Black who turns out to be in zugzwang again. This is the simplest way, but another, more universal way also exists: 3 Rb3!? Rg5 4 Rh3 Kg7 (otherwise the white king goes ahead) 5 h6+ Kg8 6 g7! (rather than 6 h7+? Kh8 7 Rh6 Rg1 and White’s king will not have a refuge from rook checks from the rear) 5…Kh7 6 Kb3, White activates his king and gradually wins (a similar position was analyzed by Kling and Horwitz as long ago as in 1851).

3 Rb5 Kg7 (3…Rg3 4 Rb3) **4 Rg5!**

Now Black has neither 4…Kh6 5 g7! nor 4…Rc3 5 h6+! K×h6 6 g7. But this position is winning for White even without this move (when the black king stands on h6).

4…Rh4

In case of 4…Kg8 5 Kb2 Re3 White plays 6 Kc2! Ra3 7 Kd2 Rb3 8 Ke2 Ra3 9 Kf2 Rb3 10 Rd5+–. A hasty 6 h6? Rh3 7 h7+ Kg7, on the contrary, leads to a theoretical draw.

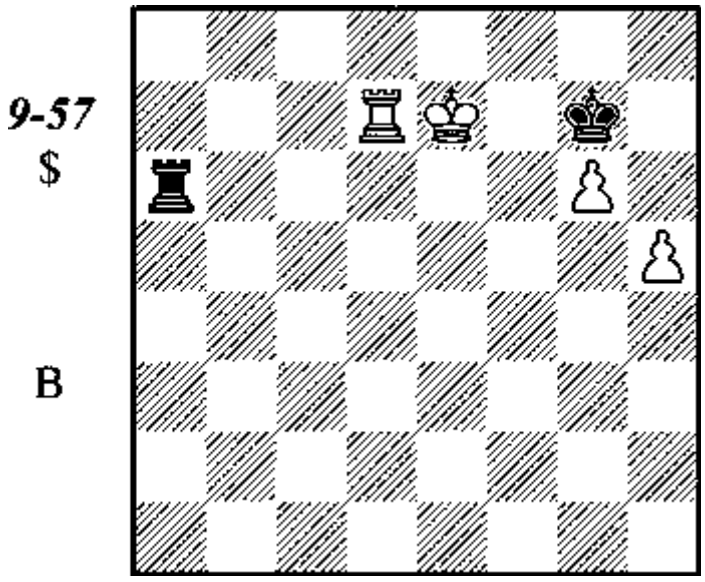
5 Kb3 Rh1 6 Kc4 Rc1+ 7 Kd5

The king must go ahead. Nothing can be achieved by 7 Kd3 Rh1 8 Ke3 Rh3+ 9 Kf2 Rh1 (rather than 9…Rh4? 10 Kg2⊙+–) 10 Kg2 Rh4⊙, and the rook cannot be forced away from the h-file.

7…Rd1+ 8 Kc6 Rc1+ 9 Kd6 Rd1+ 10 Rd5 Ra1 11 Ke7 Ra6

White’s task is less difficult after 11…Re1+ 12 Kd8! Kg8 (12…Ra1 13 Rd7+ Kg8 14 Ke7+–; 12…Kh6 13 Rd7! K×h5 14 g7 Rg1 15 Ke8 Kh6 16 Kf8+–) 13 h6! (13 Rf5!? Re6 14 Kd7 Ra6 15 Rc5+–) 13…Re6 (13…Rh1 14 Ke7!; 13…Rg1 14 Rd6) 14 h7+! (but not 14 Rg5? Ra6 15 Ke7 Rb6 16 h7+ Kg7 17 Rh5 Rb7+ 18 Ke6 Rb6+ with a draw) 14…Kh8 15 Rg5 Kg7 16 Rh5+–.

12 Rd7



12…Rb6!?

12…Ra5 13 Ke6+ Kg8 14 h6+– is quite bad. After 12…Rc6, Kasparian gives 13 Kd8+ Kg8 14 Re7 Kf8 (14…Rd6+ 15 Kc7 Ra6 16 Kd7 △ 17 Re6) 15 Kd7 Ra6 16 Re6 Ra7+ 17 Kd6 Ra6+ 18 Ke5 Ra5+ 19 Kf6+–.

13 Kd8+ Kg8

13…Kf8 is met with 14 Kc7! Ra6 15 h6 (15 Rd6) 15…R×g6 16 Rd8+ and 17 h7+–.

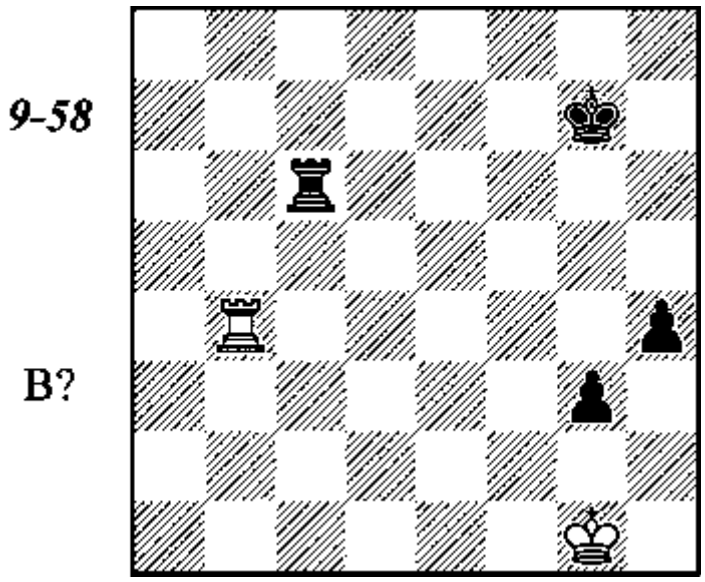
14 Kc7! Ra6 15 Rd6 △ h6+–

In *Theory of Rook Endings* by Levenfish and Smyslov, in the very end of this line, another road to the win is suggested: 14 Re7 Kf8 (14…Rd6+ 15 Kc7 Ra6 16 Kd7 Rb6 17 Re6+–) 15 Rf7+ Kg8 16 Ke7 Ra6 17 Rf6 Ra7+ 18 Ke6 Ra6+ 19 Kf5 Ra5+ 20 Kg4 Kg7 21 Rf7+. But this recommendation is incorrect: instead of 18…Ra6+?, Black plays 18…Kg7!, because after 19 Rf7+? R×f7 20 gf Kf8⊙, he holds a pawn ending despite being two pawns down.

This complicated analysis can hardly be (and certainly should not be) remembered in all its details. To know that the rook transfer to the fifth rank wins is quite enough, yet the proof of this fact turns out to be rather complicated.

Tragicomedies

Glek – Leitao
Wijk aan Zee 1999



1…Rc1+?? 2 Kg2 Rc2+ 3 Kg1 Rh2 4 Rb6

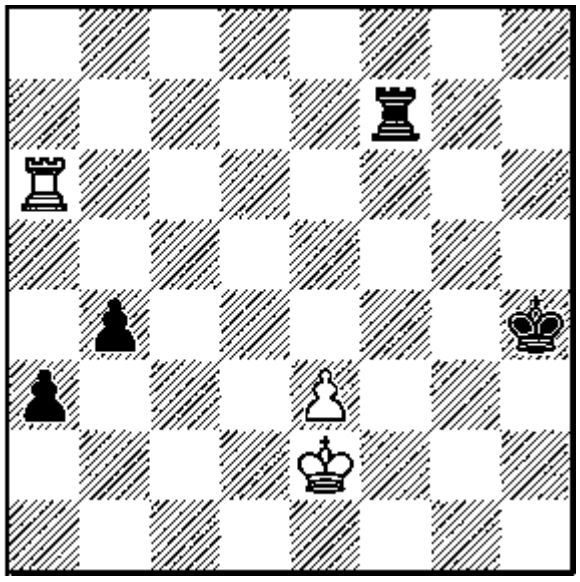
The Kasparian position – Black has no win.

4…Kf7 5 Rh6 Ke7 6 Rg6 Kf8 7 Rf6+! Ke8 8 Re6+! Kd7 9 Rh6! h3 10 Rg6 Draw.

Black could have won by means of 1…h3! 2 Rg4+ Rg6 3 Rh4 (3 Ra4 g2) 3…h2+ 4 Kg2 Rh6 5 Rg4+ Kf6 6 Rf4+ (6 Kh1 Rg6+–) 6…Kg5 7 Rf1 Kg4 8 Ra1 h1Q+ 9 R×h1 R×h1 10 K×h1 Kf3 (Glek).

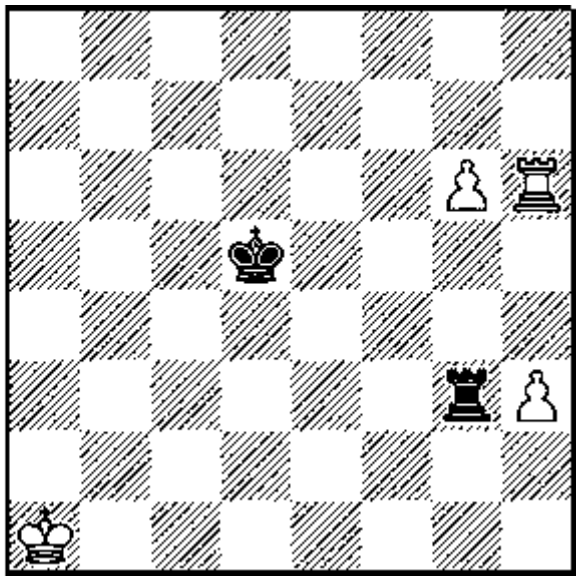
Exercises

9-59



9/7
W?

9-60

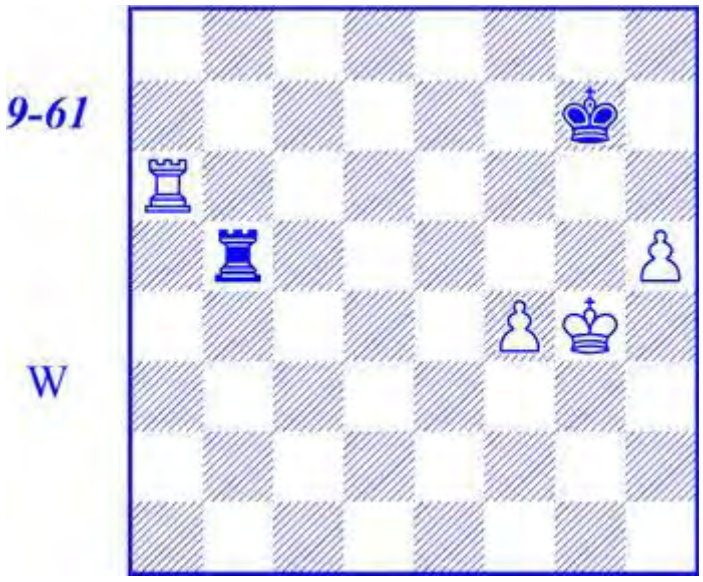


9/8
B?

f- and h-Pawns

Endings with these pawns are mostly drawn. Their theory is rather complicated and that is why we will explain only the basic ideas here. The following example from practical play shows how one should defend these positions.

Gligoric – Smyslov
Moscow 1947



The black rook is excellently placed on the fifth rank: it prevents an advance of the hostile king. If 1 f5, then 1…Rb1, threatening a series of checks from the rear.

1 Rg6+ Kf7!

1…Kh7 was not losing, but Black would have had more problems than in the game.

2 Rg5 Rb1!

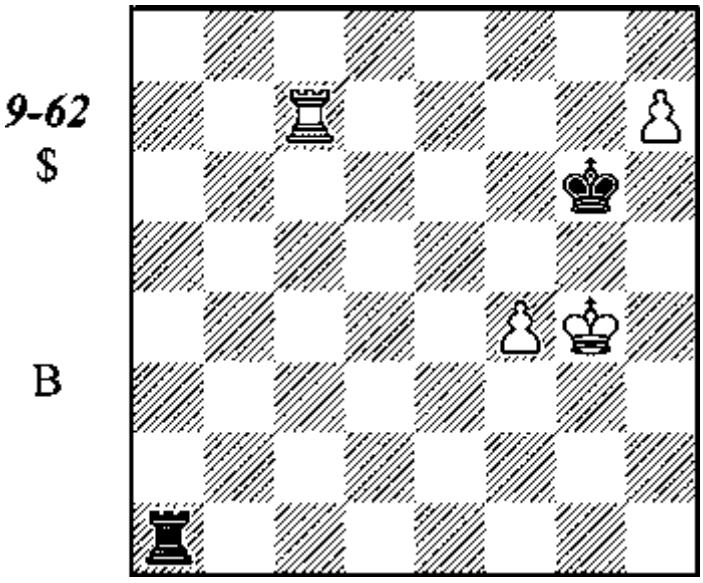
A typical retreat for this sort of situation: the rook maintains opportunities for checks from various directions, both from the side and rear.

3 Rc5

In case of 3 h6, 3…Rg1+? is an error: 4 Kf5 Rh1 5 Rg7+ Kf8 6 Kg6 Rg1+ 7 Kh7! Rf1 8 Ra7! (8 Rg4 Kf7) 8…R×f4 9 Kg6 Rg4+ 10 Kf6! Rf4+ (10…Kg8 11 Rg7+!) 11 Kg5 Rf1 12 Ra8+ Kf7 13 h7+–.

The waiting move 3…Ra1! helps, for example, 4 Rh5 (4 Kf5 Ra5+; 4 h7 Rg1+ 5 Kf5 Rh1) 4…Kg8 5 f5 Kh7.

The following attempt is interesting: 4 Rg7+ Kf6 5 Rc7!? Kg6 (Black can also play 5…Rg1+ 6 Kf3 Rh1) 6 h7.



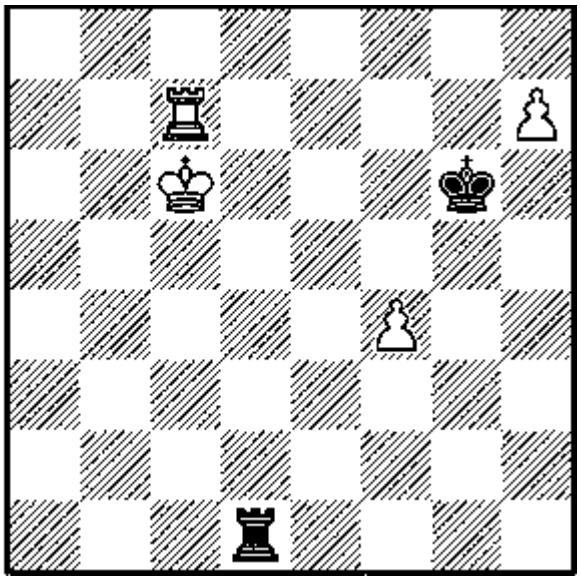
I once investigated the position that arises after 6…Rg1+? 7 Kf3 Rh1 8 Ke4 Rh5 together with grandmaster Gulko. The continuation 9 f5+? Kf6 10 Rc6+ Kg7 11 Ke5 K×h7 (11…Rh1!? is even simpler) 12 Rc7+ Kh6! 13 Kf6 Rh1 14 Rc2 Rh3!= does not promise White any success (see the ending below, Polugaevsky-Ree).

White should cede the right to move to his adversary, with the idea of forcing the black rook away from h5, and then advancing his king, when his rook stands precisely on c7. All this can be

achieved in the following way: 9 Rd7(e7) Kf6 10 Ra7 (10 Rd8? R×h7 11 Rd6+ Ke7=) 10…Kg6 (10…Rh1? 11 Ra8! R×h7 12 Ra6+) 11 Rc7!!⊙ Rh1 (11…Kf6? 12 Rc8!+–) 12 Ke5 Re1+ 13 Kd6 Rd1+ (13…Rh1 14 Re7! △ 15 Kd7) 14 Kc6

9-63

B



14…Rh1 (14…Rc1+ 15 Kb7 or 15 Kd7) 15 Re7! Kf5 16 Kd7 K×f4 17 Ke8 Kg5 18 Kf8 Kg6 19 Kg8+–.

Later, I discovered the possibility of a more stubborn defense. Instead of 14…Rh1, Black should play 14…Rd8!?.

In order for White to win, he need only get his king back to the f-pawn, while keeping the Black rook tied to the eighth rank. But how is this to be accomplished? Black answers 15 Kc5 with 15…Ra8!, after which 16 Kd4 is useless: 16…Ra4+ 17 Ke3 (17 Ke5 Ra5+ 18 Ke4 Rh5) 17…Ra3+ 18 Ke4 Rh3 (△ 19…Rh5) 19 Ke5 Re3+ 20 Kd5 Rd3+ 21 Kc6 Rd8!, etc.

Before bringing the king back, it is important to bring the rook to d7 first. Then Black's rook maneuver to h3 (as in the variation we just examined) has no point – once again, White brings his king forward, and now the Black rook cannot get to d8. The most exact line is: 16 Ra7! (not 16 Rd7 at once: 16…Ra5+ 17 Kd4?! Rh5, and White must start all over again) 16…Rb8 17 Rd7 Kf6 (17…Ra8 18 Kd4) 18 Kd4 (threatening Ke4-f3-g4) 18…Rb4+ 19 Ke3 Rb3+ 20 Ke4 Rh3 21 Kd5 Rd3+ 22 Kc6 Rc3+ 23 Kb7 Rh3 24 Kc8+–.

Instead of 6…Rg1+? Black must play 6…Rh1! immediately. If White tries the waiting move 7 Rb7, Black can wait too: 7…Rh2, with no fear of 8 Rb5 Kg7! 9 Rg5+ Kh8!. Another good line is 7…Rg1+ 8 Kf3 Rh1 9 Ke4 Re1+, because when the white rook stands on b7 the king's route around it is too long: 10 Kd5 Rd1+ 11 Kc6 Rc1+! 12 Kb6 Rh1! with a draw.

If 7 Kf3, Black can play either 7…Kf5! or 7…Kf6!? 8 Ke4 Re1+ 9 Kd5 Rd1+ 10 Kc6 Rh1!. When the black king stands on f6, White has no important move 11 Re7, while after 11 Rd7 (or 11 Kb7) 11…Kf5 the black king abolishes the f4-pawn and returns to g6 in time.

3…Kf6 4 Rc6+ Kg7!

The main danger for Black is for his king to be forced to the back rank. This could have happened after 4…Kf7? 5 Kg5 Rg1+ 6 Kf5 Rh1 7 Rc7+.

5 Kg5 Rg1+! 6 Kf5 Ra1 7 Rc7+ (7 Rg6+ Kf7) **7…Kh6 8 Re7 Rb1 9. Re8 Kg7 10 Re5 Ra1 11 Rd5 Rf1**

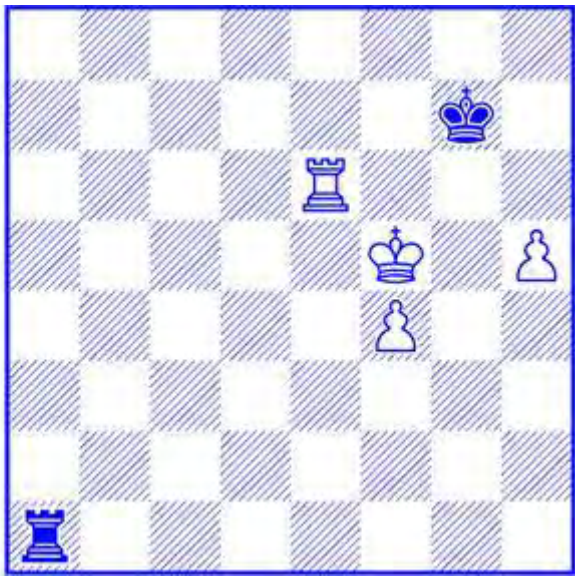
Not a bad move, but holding the rook in the corner was quite enough.

12 Rd4 Ra1 13 Rd6 Ra5+ 14 Kg4 Ra1

14…Rb5 is also playable: it leads back to the initial position.

15 Re6 Rg1+ 16 Kf5 Ra1

9-64



W

17 h6+ Kh7! 18 Rd6 Ra2 19 Kg5 Rg2+ 20 Kf6 K×h6! 21 Ke7+ Kh7 22 f5 Re2+ 23 Re6 Ra2 24 f6 Ra8!

We have discussed this sort of position in the section dedicated to the pawn on sixth rank. The black rook is placed on the long side, so a draw is inevitable.

25 Kf7 Kh6 26 Re1 Ra7+ 27 Re7 Ra8 28 Rd7 Kh7 29 Rd1 Ra7+ 30 Ke6 Ra6+ 31 Rd6 Ra8 32 Rd4 Kg8 33 Rg4+ Kf8 Draw.

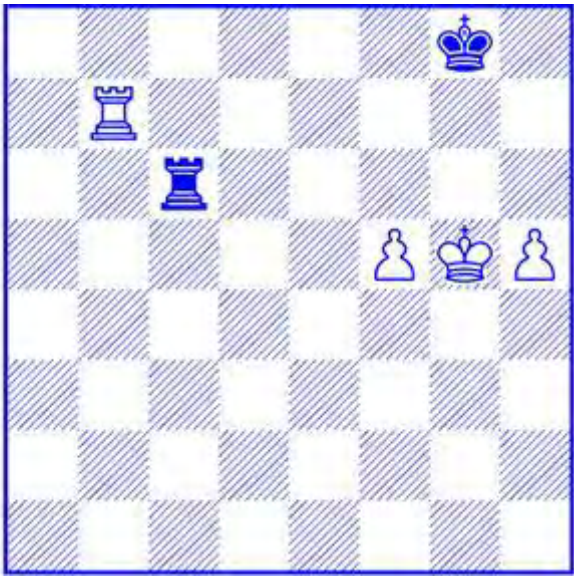
In this example, Black kept his king on f7 until the danger of its being driven to the back rank arose. Thereafter the king went to g7 and later on – to h6, attacking the white pawn. But, strictly speaking, Kopaev's recommendation was to place the king in front of the more advanced pawn.

The best position for the rook is on a1; it is ideally suited for giving checks along files as well as ranks. However, if the pawns are not advanced too far, the rook stands quite well on the fifth rank, and sometimes on f1.

It goes without saying that not all positions with f- and h-pawns are drawn. The most important exception was already mentioned above: ***Black usually loses if his king is cut off on the back rank***.

Capablanca – Kostic
Havana m (1) 1919

9-65



W

One does not need to keep the solution in mind because White has many winning ways to choose from.

1 f6

Kopaev suggests 1 Rb8+ Kh7 (1…Kf7 2 h6 △ 3 h7; 1…Kg7 2 f6+! R×f6 3 h6+) 2 f6 Rc5+ (2…Rc7 3 Re8) 3 Kg4 Rc4+ 4 Kf5 Rc5+ 5 Ke6 Rc6+ 6 Ke7 Rc7+ 7 Kf8 Kh6 8 f7+–.

1…Rc1 2 Rg7+

Belavenets's suggestion is also good: 2 h6 Rg1+ 3 Kf5 Rf1+ 4 Ke6. The king is striving for the eighth rank. If 4…Re1+, then 5 Kd6! (rather than 5 Kd7? Kf7 6 h7 Rh1=).

2…Kf8?!

This loses at once, but 2…Kh8 could postpone the loss only for a little while: 3 Kg6 Rg1+ 4 Kf7 Ra1 5 Rg8+ Kh7 6 Re8 Ra7+ 7 Kf8. White's next move will be 8 f7 (the h5-pawn deprives the black king of the important g6-square).

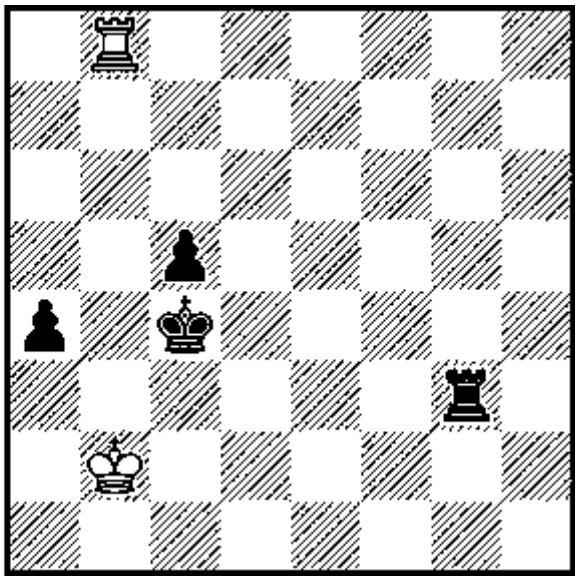
3 h6

Black resigned; he cannot prevent h6-h7.

Tragicomedies

Polugaevsky – Ree
Amsterdam 1981

9-66



W

1 Ra8?!

The simplest way is to keep the rook on h8, in order to profit by the side checks in case of an emergency.

1…Rg2+ 2 Ka3 Kc3 3 R×a4

It was still not too late to bring the rook to the long side, for example 3 Rh8!? c4 4 Rh3+ Kd2 5 Kb4!=. However this capture does not lose, contrary to comments by Krnic in the *Chess Informant*.

3…c4 4 Ra8 Rg7 5 Ka2??

This is the decisive error! Now the black king advances while the white rook remains chained to the a-file. He should have followed a waiting policy: 5 Ra6! Rd7 6 Ra8 Rd1 (6…Kc2 7 Rh8!) 7 Ka2 Kc2 8 Rh8 c3 9 Rh2+ with a draw.

5…Kc2–+ 6 Ka1 c3 7 Ka2 Rb7 8 Ra6 Rd7 9 Ra8 Kd2 White resigned.

Other Pairs of Disconnected Pawns

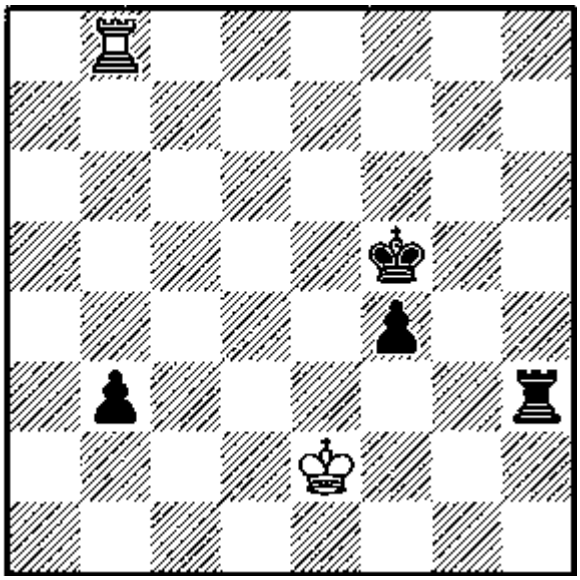
As a rule, two extra pawns are sufficient for a win. However exceptions occur now and then. They are caused either by the stronger side having badly placed pieces while the defender's pieces are active, or by inattention (when the stronger side anticipate a quick win too nonchalantly). This last case is illustrated by all the practical examples that follow.

Tragicomedies

Bernstein – Smyslov
Groningen 1946

9-67

B



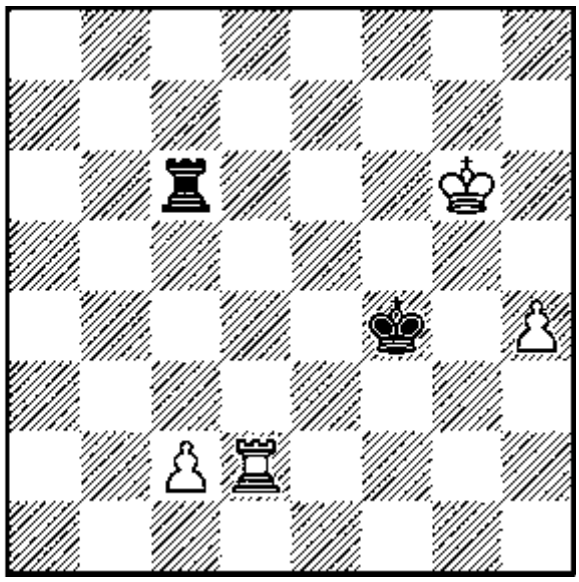
1…b2?? (both 1…Ke5 and 1…Ke4 won elementarily) **2 R×b2! Kg4**
The planned 2…Rh2+ turned out to be ineffective because of the stalemate after 3 Kf3 R×b2.
3 Kf1
Draw. The Philidor position has arisen.

A similar story happened in the following endgame.

Gufeld – Bronstein
Kislovodsk 1968

9-68

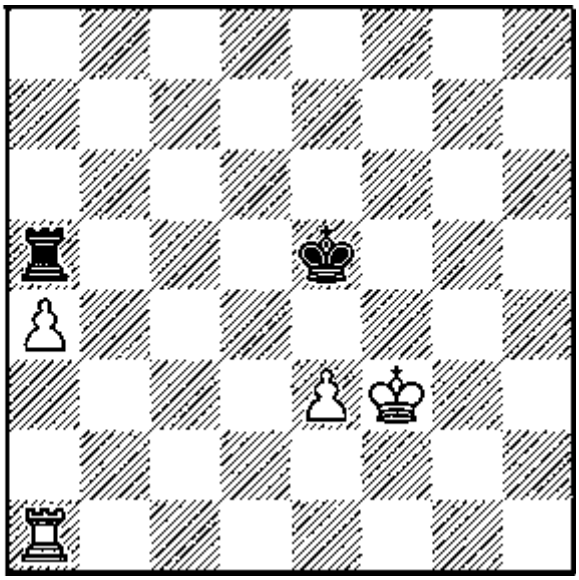
W?



With 1 Kf7!, White maintains his two extra pawns: 1…Kg4 (1…Ke3 2 Rh2) 2 Rd4+ Kf5 3 c4 Rc7+ (3…Ke5 4 Rd5+ Ke4 5 Rg5) 4 Ke8! Ke5 5 Rg4 Kf5 6 Kd8! with an easy win.
1 Kg7? Kg4
Now 2 Rd4+ Kh5 3 c4 can be met by 3…R×c4! 4 R×c4 – stalemate.
2 Rh2 Kg3! 3 Rh1 R×c2 4 h5 Rc7+ 5 Kf6 Rc6+ 6 Kf7 Rc7+ 7 Ke6 Rc6+ 8 Kd5 Rh6 9 Ke4 Kg2 10 Rh4 Kg3 11 Rh1 Kg2 Draw.

Kasparov – Short
London m (9) 1993

9-69



W

The rook that blocks a passed pawn cannot, as a rule, leave its post unpunished. Therefore it would have been wise to play for zugzwang: 1 Ra2!? Kf5 2 e4+ Ke5 3 Ke3, and now 3…Ra8 (3…Rc5 4 Kd3) 4 a5 Rh8 5 Ra4 (or 5 Rf2).

Another winning method was 1 Ke2 (△ Kd3-c4-b4) 1…Ke4 2 Rf1! △ Rf4+ (2 Rh1 Rh5! 3 Rf1!).

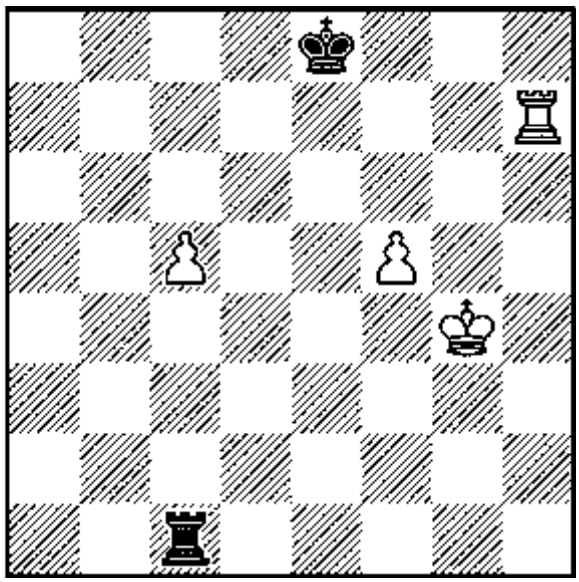
1 e4?? Ke6??

Both opponents are hypnotized by the abovementioned rule. However this was an appropriate moment for neglecting it (there are no absolute rules in chess!) by playing 1…Rc5!. Black could then regain a pawn and block the a-pawn again in time, for example, 2 a5 (2 Ra3 Rc4 3 a5 R×e4 4 a6 Rf4+ △ Rf8=) 2…Rc3+ 3 Kg4 (3 Ke2 K×e4 4 a6 Rc8=) 3…K×e4 4 a6 Rc8 5 a7, and here the most precise defense is 5…Rg8+! 6 Kh5 Ra8, although 5…Ra8 6 Ra5 Kd4 7 Kf5 Kc4 8 Ke6 Kb4 9 Ra1 Kc5! is also sufficient for a draw (rather than 9…Kb5? 10 Kd6 Kb6 11 Rb1+!), e.g., 10 Kd7 Kb6 11 Rb1+ Kc5! 12 Rb7 Rh8=.

2 Ke3 Kd6 3 Kd4 Kd7 4 Kc4 Kc6 5 Kb4 Re5 6 Rc1+ Kb6 7 Rc4 Black resigned.

Larsen – Torre
Leningrad izt 1973

9-70



W

A natural method of exploiting two extra pawns is a transition to theoretically winning positions with one extra pawn.

This method could be applied here: 1 Kg5! R×c5 2 Kg6 △ Rh8+. White has a simple win because the black king is on the long side.

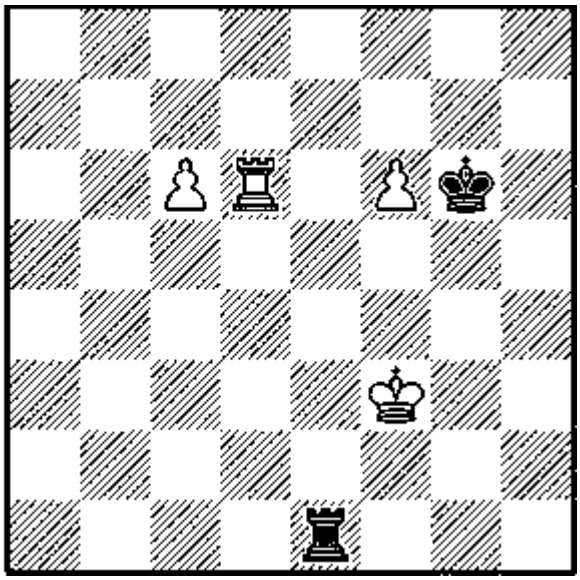
1 Rc7?! Kd8 2 Rc6 Kd7 3 Rd6+ Ke7 4 f6+??

After 4 Re6+! Kf7 5 c6 Rf1 6 Kg5 Rf2 7 Rd6, Black would have had no alternative but to resign. 4 Rd5+– was also good.

4…Kf7 5 c6 Kg6! 6 Kf3 Re1!=

9-71

W



The rook cuts the hostile king off from both pawns. White cannot strengthen his position.

7 Kf4 Re2 8 Rd5 Rc2

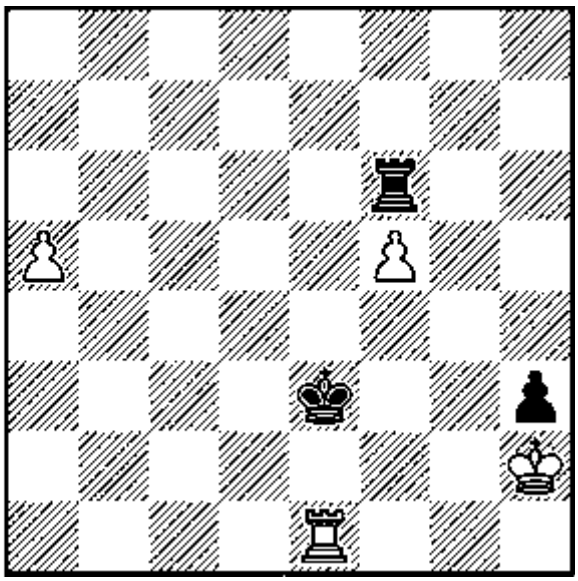
8…K×f6? is erroneous: 9 Rc5 Re8 10 Rf5+! Kg6 (10…Ke7 11 Re5+ Kf7 12 R×e8 K×e8 13 Ke5+–) 11 Re5! Rc8 12 Re6+ Kf7 13 Ke5+–.

9 Rd6 Re2 10 f7+ K×f7 11 Kf5 Ke7 12 Rd7+ Ke8 13 Kf6 Re1 14 Rd5 Rc1 15 Rd6 Rf1+ 16 Ke6 Re1+ 17 Kd5 Rd1+ 18 Kc5 R×d6 19 K×d6 Kd8 Draw.

Exercises

9-72

9/9
B?



A Far-Advanced Passed Pawn

Transition to a Rook vs. Pawns Endgame

It often happens that a passed pawn is so strong that the opponent must inevitably give a rook away for it. In such cases, one should take into account and know well the methods we have learned from studying rook versus pawns endgames.

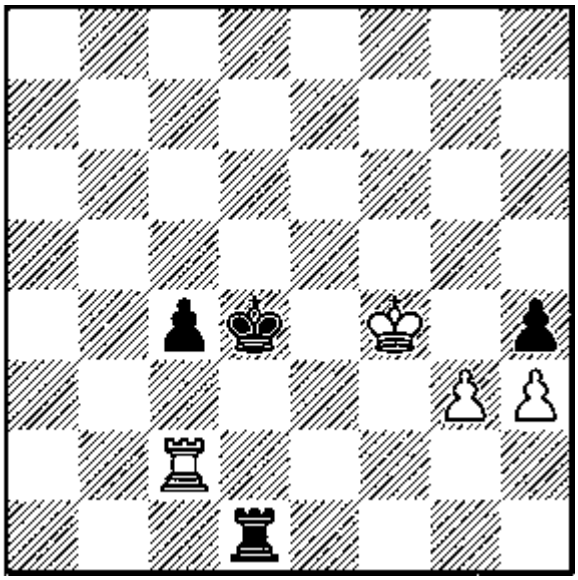
Black's actions in the following endgame were based on two typical methods: shouldering and cutting off the king.

Yusupov – Tseshkovsky

Moscow tt 1981

9-73

B?



In case of the straightforward 1…hg? (1…Kd3? 2 Rf2! or 2 Rg2! has the same consequences) 2 K×g3 Kd3 3 Ra2 c3 4 h4 c2 5 R×c2 K×c2 White, of course, cannot play 6 h5?? Rd4!, but 6 Kg4? Kd3 7 h5 Ke4 8 Kg5 Ke5 9 Kg6 Ke6 10 h6 Rg1+ also loses. It is shouldering that helps here: 6 Kf4! Kd3 7 h5 Rh1 8 Kg5 Ke4 9 h6 Ke5 10 Kg6 Ke6 11 Kg7! (rather than 11 h7? Rg1+ 12 Kh6 Kf7 13 h8N+ Kf6 14 Kh7 Rg2⊙–+) 11…Ke7 (11…Rg1+ 12 Kf8) 12 h7 Rg1+ 13 Kh8!=.

Deliberating over his next move, Tseshkovsky recognized White's defensive plan and found how to prevent its realization.

1…Rf1+!! 2 Kg4 hg

Now, after 3 K×g3 Kd3 4 Ra2 c3 5 h4 c2 6 R×c2 K×c2, the white king cannot go to f4, and White loses.

3 Rd2+ Ke3 4 Rg2

4 Rc2 Rf4+! 5 K×g3 Rd4 6 h4 Kd3 changes nothing.

4…Rf4+!

White could hold after 4…c3? 5 R×g3+ Kd4 6 Rg2 Kd3 7 h4 (compared with the line 3 K×g3 Kd3 he would have an extra tempo). Alas, Black wins easily by means of cutting the king off along the fourth rank.

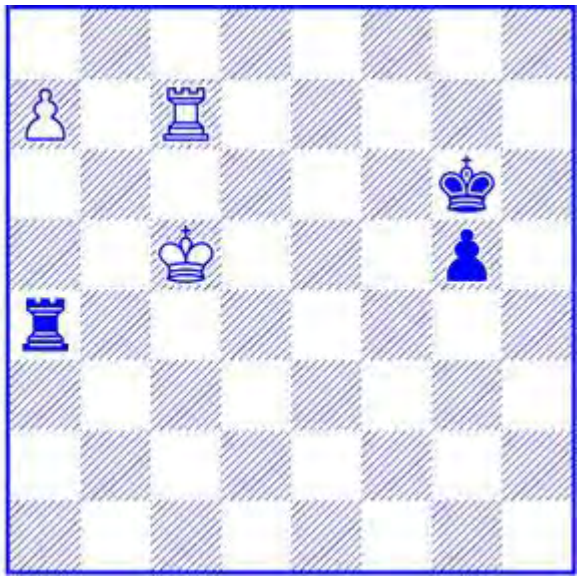
5 K×g3 c3 6 h4 Rc4 7 Rc2 Kd3 8 Rc1 c2 9 h5 Kd2 10 Rh1 c1Q 11 R×c1 K×c1! White resigned.

The most important method in sharp endings with a far-advanced passed pawn is ***interference*** ("building a bridge"). It occurs, together with other useful techniques, in the following example.

Balashov – Dvoretsky

USSR ch tt, Moscow 1967*

9-74



B?

The main threat is by no means Kc5-b6-b7 – in that case the king will certainly be late when coming back to fight against the black pawn. White is planning 2 Kb5! followed by the interference: Rc6+ and Ra6. If 1…Kf5?, then again 2 Kb5! Ra1 (2…R×a7 3 R×a7 g4 4 Kc4 Ke4 5 Rg7 Kf3 6 Kd3 g3 7 Rf7+ and 8 Ke2) 3 Rc5+! Kf4 4 Rc4+ and 5 Ra4, or 3…Kf6 4 Rc6+ and 5 Ra6.

Every tempo counts in such situations. Black holds by means of ***driving the king away by vertical checks***. The king should be driven as far as possible from the g-pawn.

1…Ra1! 2 Kb6 Rb1+! 3 Kc6 Ra1 4 Kb7 Rb1+ (the immediate 4…Kf5 is also sufficient for a draw) **5 Kc8 Ra1 6 Kb8 Kf5**=

Another method of preventing the threat of interference, 1…Kh5?, looks less attractive: the king on the h-file will be unable to shoulder his counterpart. In reality, this move loses, and its eventual consequences are quite instructive:

2 Kb6 (△ 3 Rc8)

9-75

B

2…Ra1

2…g4 is very bad in view of 3 Rc5+ and 4 Ra5 (a bridge again). The same method decides in case of 2…Rb4+ 3 Ka5 Rb1 4 Rc4!.

After 2…Kh4, White can apply another typical method: ***deflection*** of the rook, namely 3 Rc4+ R×c4 4 a8Q. However, after 4…Rf4, a theoretically drawn position arises (we will study this sort of ending later in the book). Therefore the interference method should also be applied here: 3 Kb5! Ra1 4 Rc4+ and 5 Ra4.

3 Rc8!

3 Rc5? R×a7 is erroneous: the rook is placed badly on the fifth rank, and even more, it stands in

the way of the white king.

3…R×a7

Equivalent is 3…g4 (or 3…Kg4) 4 a8Q R×a8 5 R×a8.

4 K×a7 Kg4

Or 4…g4 5 Kb6 g3 6 Rg8! (6 Kc5? Kg4!=) 6…Kh4 7 Kc5 Kh3 8 Kd4 g2 9 Ke3 Kh2 10 Kf2+–.

5 Kb6 Kf3 6 Rf8+!

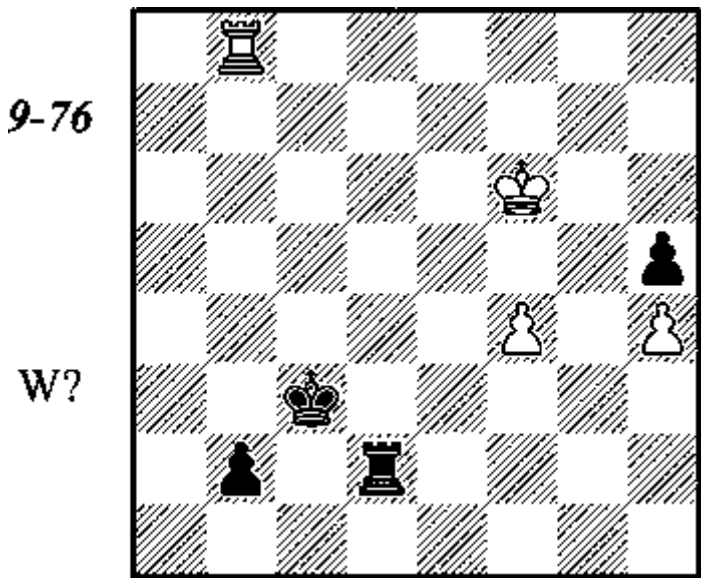
A familiar method: zwischenschach for gaining a tempo.

6…Ke3 7 Rg8! Kf4 8 Kc5 g4 9 Kd4 Kf3 10 Kd3 g3 11 Rf8+ Kg2 12 Ke2+–.

Tragicomedies

Peters – Browne

USA ch, South Bend 1981



Keeping the previous example in mind, we can easily find the correct solution; it is based upon driving the king away by vertical checks: 1 Rc8+! Kd3 2 Rb8 (2 Rd8+) 2…Kc2 3 Rc8+! Kd1 4 Rb8 Kc1 5 f5 (5 Kg6) 5…b1Q 6 R×b1+ K×b1 7 Kg6=.

1 f5?

White fails to tackle a relatively simple problem. The attempt to set another pawn in motion also loses: 1 Kg6? Rd1 2 R×b2 K×b2 3 K×h5 Kc3 4 Kg6 Kd4 5 h5 Kd5 6 f5 (6 h6 Ke6) 6…Kd6 7 h6 (7 f6 Ke6–+) 7…Ke7 8 h7 Rg1+ 9 Kh6 Kf7 10 h8N+ Kf6 11 Kh7 K×f5 12 Nf7 Kf6–+.

1…Rd1 2 R×b2 (2 Kg6 b1Q 3 R×b1 R×b1 is the same) **2…K×b2**

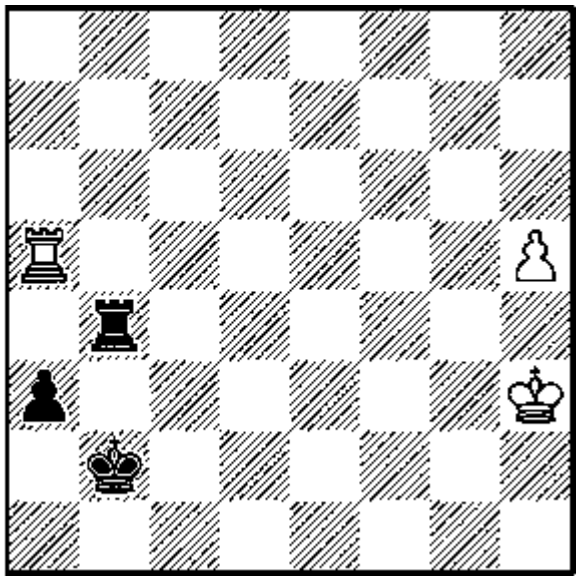
In the 1 Rc8+! line, the same position occurs, but with the king on b1, one square farther. This tempo turns out to be decisive.

3 Kg6 Kc3 4 K×h5 Kd4 5 Kg6 Ke5 6 h5 Rg1+ 7 Kf7 K×f5 8 h6 Ra1 9 h7 Ra7+ 10 Kg8 Kg6 White resigned.

Tarrasch – Blümich

Breslau 1925

9-77



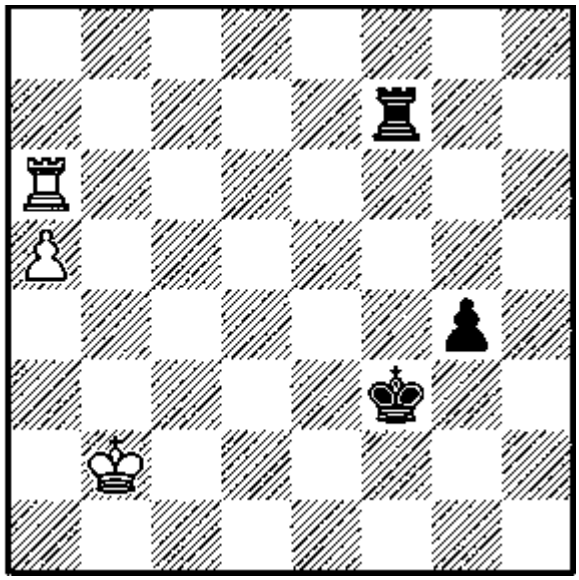
W

Tarrasch resigned! He saw that his king was cut off from his own pawn along the fourth rank, while the attempt to advance the pawn, **1 h6**, would have been met by **1…Rb6 2 Rh5 a2 3 h7 Rb8** (and, if 4 Ra5, then 4…a1Q 5 R×a1 K×a1 6 Kg4 Rh8–+).

The grandmaster had completely forgotten the possibility of deflecting the black rook from the eighth rank: **4 Rb5+! R×b5 5 h8Q+**.

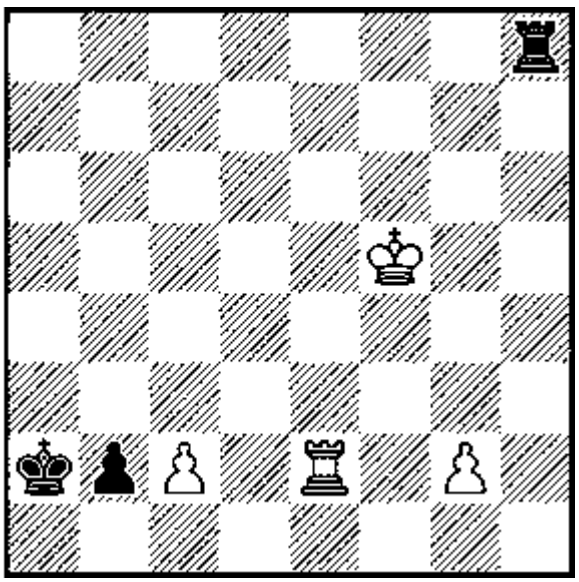
Exercises

9-78



9/10
B?

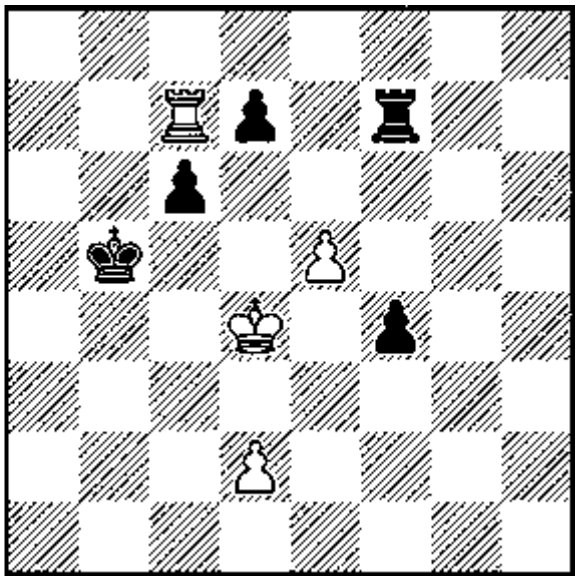
9-79



9/11
W?

9-80

9/12
W?/Play



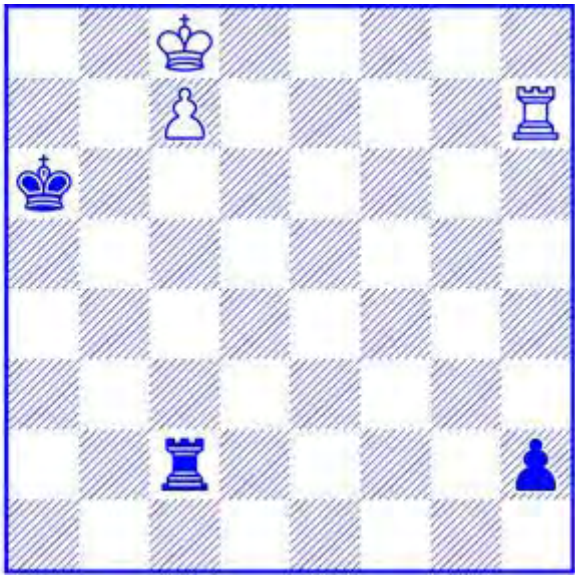
Lasker's Idea

Books on chess endings contain many interesting and instructive rook-and-pawn endings with a single pawn on each side. We have already studied some typical methods that are characteristic for this material in the previous section of the book. Now we shall discuss one more idea. The second world champion introduced it.

Em. Lasker, 1890

9-81

W?



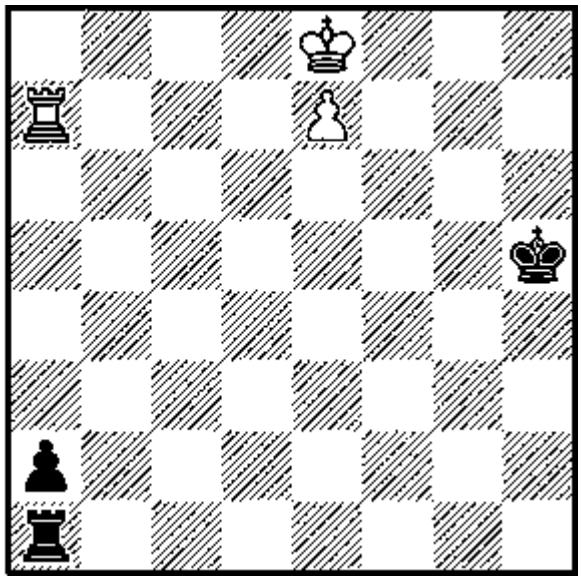
Were Black on move, he could hold the game by playing 1…Ka7! or 1…Rb2!. But it is White who is on move, and he sets into motion a mechanism that gradually drives the black king as far away as the second rank.

1 Kb8! Rb2+ 2 Ka8 Rc2 3 Rh6+ Ka5 4 Kb7 Rb2+ 5 Ka7 Rc2 6 Rh5+ Ka4 7 Kb7 Rb2+ 8 Ka6 Rc2 9 Rh4+ Ka3 10 Kb6 Rb2+ 11 Ka5! Rc2 12 Rh3+ Ka2 13 R×h2+–.

A slightly more complicated version of the same idea is demonstrated in the following example.

P. Keres, 1947*

9-82
$



W

1 Ra3 Kh4!

Black prevents the rook transfer to the second rank: 2 Rh3+ and 3 Rh2.

2 Ra5!⊙

When the black king is placed on h4, 2 Kf7? is senseless – after 2…Rf1+ 3 Kg6 Rg1+ 4 Kh6 Re1, White's king has traveled too far away from the e7-pawn and cannot protect it. Therefore White waits; he realizes that Black's king is placed worse on any square other than h4.

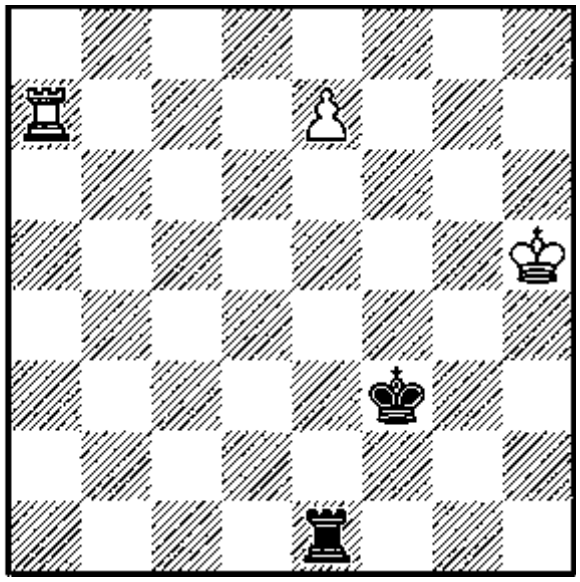
It is worth mentioning that the diagrammed position occurred, with reversed colors, in the game I. Zaitsev-Dvoretsky, Moscow ch 1973. I did not know the endgame study by Keres and, having discovered the same idea, executed it in a slightly different way: 1 Ra5+ Kh4! 2 Ra3!⊙. The game continued 2…Kg5 (in case of 2…Kg4 3 Kf7, we transpose into the main line of the Keres' study) 3 Rg3+ Kf4 4 Rg2 Kf3 5 Rh2 (Keres suggests 5 Rb2 Ke3 6 Kd7 Rd1+ 7 Kc7 Rc1+ 8 Kb7 a1Q 9 e8Q+) 5…Ke3 6 Rb2⊙ Ke4 7 Re2+ Kd3 8 Kd8 K×e2 9 e8Q+, and my opponent resigned after a few more moves.

2…Kg4 3 Kf7! Rf1+ 4 Kg6 Re1 5 Ra4+ Kh3 6 Kf6 Rf1+ 7 Kg5 Rg1+ 8 Kh5 Re1 9 Ra3+ Kg2 10 R×a2+

In the study by Lasker, this was the termination point; but here the fight goes on.

10…Kf3 11 Ra7

9-83



B

11…Re6! 12 Kg5 Ke4 13 Rb7(c7)!

13 Rd7? is incorrect on account of 13…Ke5⊙=.

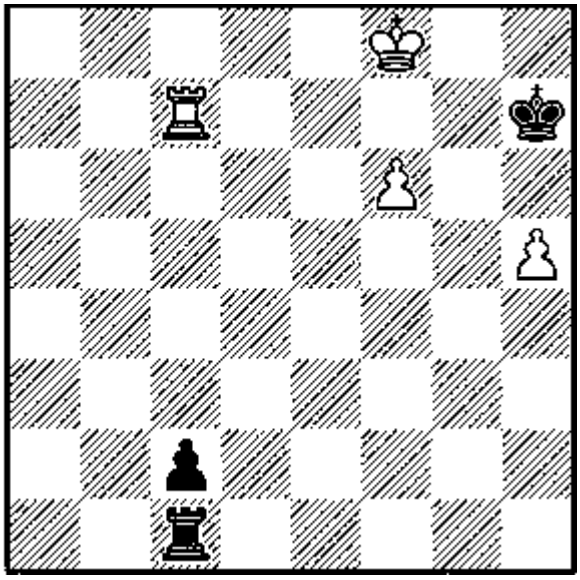
13…Ke5 (13…Kd5 14 Kf5) **14 Rd7**

Now it is Black who has fallen into zugzwang.

14…Ke4 15 Rd1! Kf3 16 Rf1+ Ke2 17 Rf7 Ke3 18 Kf5+–.

Exercise

9-84



9/13
B?

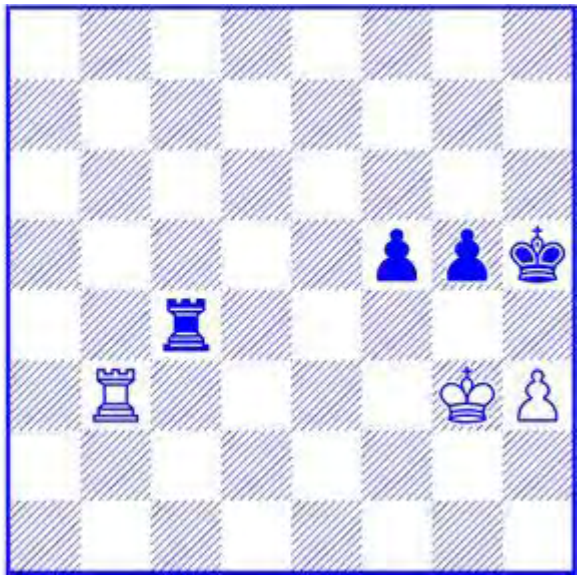
A Rook and Two Pawns vs. a Rook and Pawn

All Pawns Are on the Same Wing

If all the pawns are grouped on the same wing, then a draw is the most probable outcome. Even when there is a passed pawn, the defense is, as a rule, not too difficult.

Smyslov – Keres
USSR ch, Moscow 1949

9-85



W

Black is planning 1…f4+ and 2…Kh4. A reliable method of preventing a king invasion is a rook check from h8.

1 Rb8! f4+ 2 Kg2 Rc2+ 3 Kf3!

3 Kg1? loses to 3…Kh4 4 Rb3 Re2 △ 5…Re3.

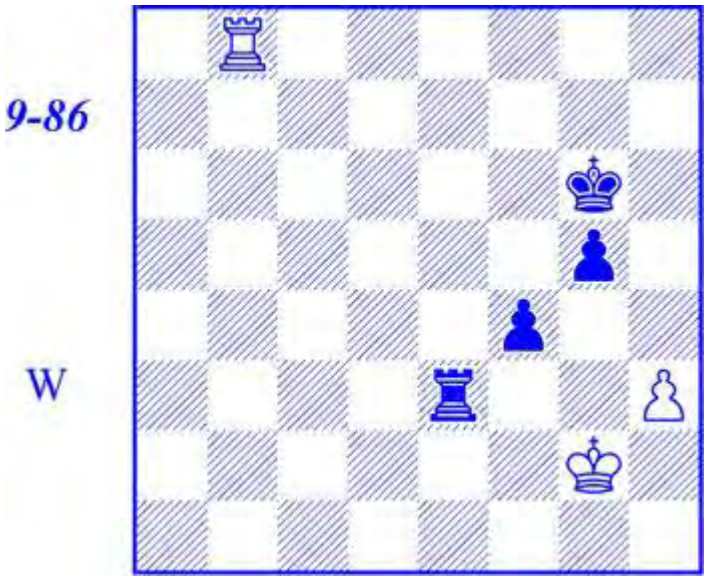
3…Rc3+

There is no danger for White in 3…Rh2 4 Rh8+ Kg6 5 Rg8+ Kf6 6 Rh8 Kg7 7 Rh5 Kg6 8 Rh8 Kf6 9 Kg4! (9 Rh5? Kf5 10 Rh8 R×h3+!) 9…Rg2+ 10 Kf3 Rg3+ 11 Kf2, and 11…Kg6 can be met, besides the waiting 12 Kf1, even with 12 h4 g4 13 Rg8+ (or 13 Rf8 Rf3+ 14 Kg2).

4 Kg2 Rg3+ 5 Kh2 Re3 6 Kg2

6 Rh8+ Kg6 7 h4! g4 8 Rg8+ Kf5 (8…Kh5 9 Rh8+) 9 Rg5+ Ke4 10 R×g4=.

6…Kg6



7 Rf8!

The simplest solution: White cuts the enemy king off from the center of the board.

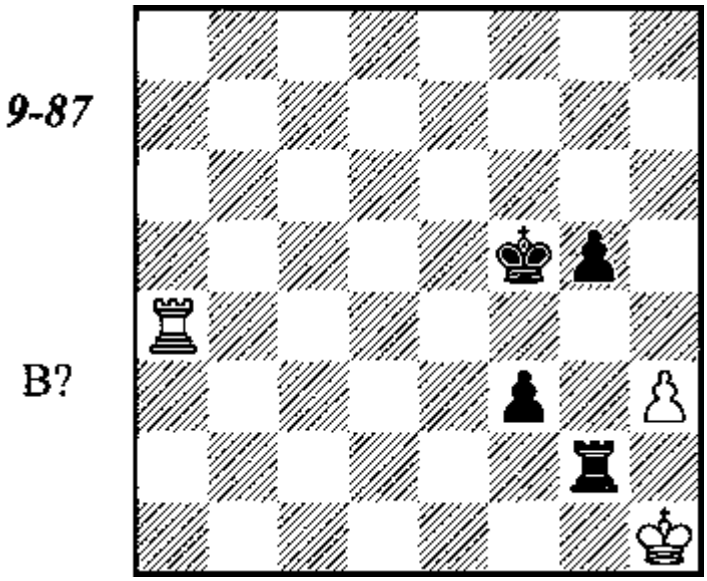
7…Re2+ 8 Kf3 Rh2 9 Rh8 Kg7 10 Rh5 Kf6 11 Rh8 Rh1 12 Kg2 Rd1 13 Rf8+ Kg7 14 Rf5 Rd2+ 15 Kf3 Rd3+ 16 Kg2 Kg6 Draw.

Cutting the king off along the f-file is not obligatory (even more so because Black can overcome it). Instead of 7 Rf8, **7 Ra8 Kf5 8 Ra5+ Re5 9 Ra8** is possible. The game Timman-Radulov, Wijk aan Zee 1974 (with reversed colors and wings) went 9…Rd5 10 Rf8+ Ke4 11 Re8+ Kd3 12 Kf3 Kd2 13 Kf2 Kd1 14 Rf8 Rd2+ 15 Kf1 Rh2 16 Rf5 Kd2 17 R×g5 Ke3 18 Ra5 Draw.

If **9…Re2+**, White should play 10 Kf3 Re3+ (10…Rh2 11 Rf8+! followed with Rh8) 11 Kg2=.

It is worth mentioning that here again, as on move 3, a retreat of the king to the back rank loses.

10 Kg1? f3 11 Ra4 Rg2+! (11…Re4? 12 Ra2 Kf4 13 Kf2 Re2+ 14 R×e2 fe 15 h4!=) **12 Kh1** (12 Kf1 Rh2 13 Ra5+ Kg6–+)



This position occurred in Schmidt-Plachetka, Decin 1976, with a single unimportant difference: the white rook stood on b4.

12…g4! 13 hg+ (13 R×g4 R×g4 14 hg+ K×g4–+) **13…Kg5!**

In case of 13…R×g4? 14 Ra2 Kf4 15 Kh2 Rh4+ 16 Kg1 Kg3, White holds the endgame because of a stalemate: 17 Rg2+!.

Now Black threatens 14…Re2 followed by …Kh4-g3. As we know, a passive defense with the rook on the first rank does not help against an f-pawn. As for checks from the rear, Black will use the g-pawn as an umbrella against them.

14 Ra1 Re2!

In the game, Plachetka choose an erroneous continuation 14…Kh4?, and White managed to hold

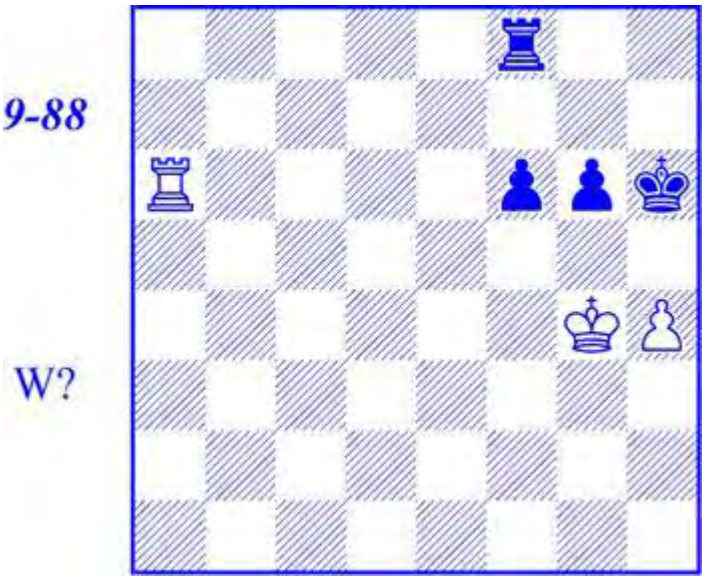
the game by means of 15 Rf1! Rg3 (if 15…Kg3 16 Rg1 Kf2 17 Ra1 R×g4, a stalemate saves White again: 18 Ra2+ Kg3 19 Kg1 Rb4 20 Rg2+!) 16 g5! K×g5 17 Ra1.

However a step by the king to the opposite direction would have led to a win: 14…Kf4! 15 g5 (15 Rf1 Re2 16 g5 Kg3 17 Rg1+ Kh3 18 Rf1 f2, or 15 Rg1 Re2) 15…Kg3 (16…Rh2+ 17 Kg1 f2+ is threatened) 16 Rg1 Kf2 17 Ra1 Rg4! 18 Ra2+ Kg3 19 Kg1 Rb4 (the g-pawn is still on the board, so there is no stalemate possibility) 20 Ra1 Rb2 21 g6 Rg2+ 22 Kf1 Rh2–+.

15 Rg1 Kh4 16 g5 Kh3 (16…f2) **17 Ra1 Rh2+ 18 Kg1 f2+**–+.

Vaiser – Djuric

Szirak 1985



In comparison with the previous ending, the black pawns are less advanced. This circumstance seems to be in White's favor, but actually he is faced with severe problems. His rook cannot reach h8, as with Smyslov's defensive method against a king penetration via the h-file.

For example, if 1 Rb6?, then 1…f5+ 2 Kf4 Ra8 3 Rb7 Ra4+ 4 Kg3 Ra3+ 5 Kg2 (5 Kf4 Rh3) 5…Kh5 6 Rh7+ Kg4 7 Rh6 Ra6–+.

In Gliksman-Novak, Stary Smokovec 1976, the same position with reversed colors arose. The game continued 1 h5? g5! (1…gh+ leads to a drawn endgame with f- and h-pawns) 2 Rb6 Rf7 3 Ra6 Kg7 4 Kf5 Rb7 5 h6+ (5 Ra5 Kh6! 6 K×f6 Rb1 7 Kf5 K×h5) 5…K×h6 6 R×f6+ Kh5 7 Ke5 Rb3 8 Rf1 Kh4 9 Rh1+ Rh3 and Black won.

Vaiser discovered a new defensive method for this sort of ending, and thus a highly important one:

1 Kh3!! f5 2 Ra3!

The immediate 1 Ra3 Rb8 2 Rf3 Rb6!⊙ 3 Kg3 (3 Rf1? f5+ 4 Kh3 Rb3+ 5 Kh2 Rb4–+) 3…Kh5 4 Kh3 Ra6!? 5 Rf1! (5 Kg3? f5 △ 6…Ra4–+) 5…Ra3+ 6 Kh2 f5 7 Rg1= was good enough, too.

2…Rf7

2…Rb8 was more sensible, because here White, if he wished, could have played 3 Ra8 transposing to the plan we already know.

3 Rb3!? Re7 4 Rg3! Re8 5 Rg1 Re3+ 6 Kh2

It becomes clear that the black king cannot go ahead when the white rook is placed on the g-file: 6…Kh5 7 Rg5+.

6…Rd3 7 Rg2 Rd6

If 7…f4, then 8 Rg4 (8 Rf2 Rd4 9 Kh3 Kh5 10 Rd2!= is also good) 8…Rd2+ 9 Kg1 (9 Kh3) 9…f3 10 Rf4 Rd3 11 Rg4 △ Kf2=.

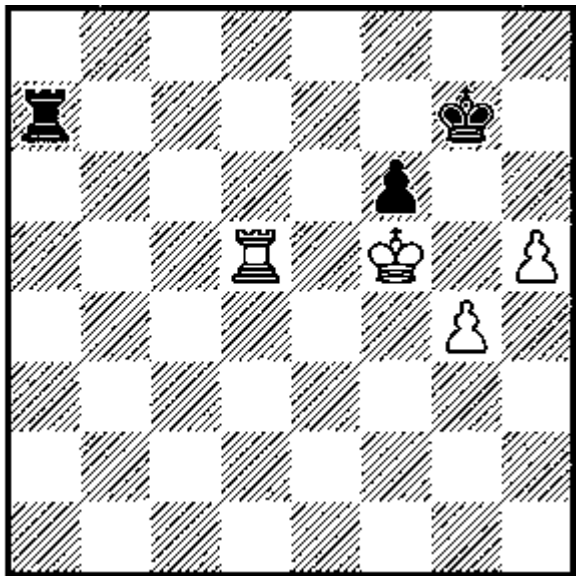
8 Kh3 Rf6 9 Rg5!

Draw in view of 9…f4 10 Kg2 f3+ 11 Kf2 Rf4 12 Rg3 Kh5 13 Rg5+!.

Tragicomedies

J. Polgar – Short
Monaco bl 1993

9-89



B

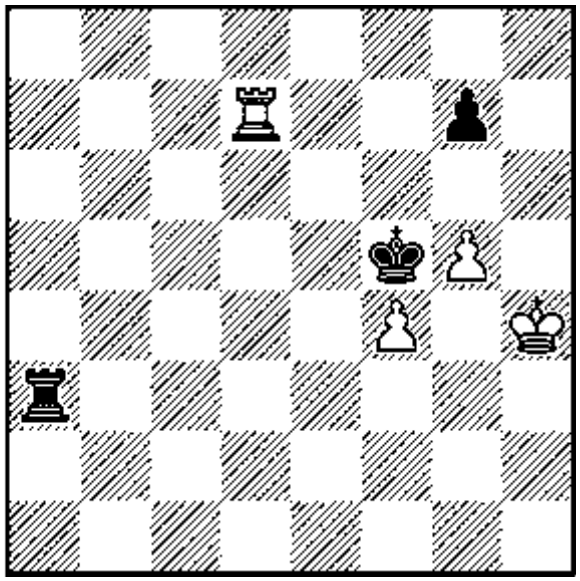
After the waiting move 1…Rb7, the position is still drawn: 2 Ke6 Rb4 (2…Rb1 is equivalent) 3 Rd7+ Kh6 4 Kf5 Rb5+ 5 K×f6 Rb4! 6 g5+ (6 Kf5 Rf4+ or 6…R×g4 leads to stalemate) 6…K×h5 7 Rh7+ Kg4 8 g6 Rb6+ 9 Kf7 Rb7+ 10 Kg8 Rb8+ 11 Kg7 Kg5= (Müller).

Short decided to at least prevent the king from invading at e6, but the cure proved worse than the disease – his resourceful adversary found an elegant forced win.

1…Re7?? 2 h6+! Kf7 (2…K×h6 3 K×f6+–) **3 g5!! fg 4 Rd8!**+–.

Hebden – Wood
Hastings 1994/95

9-90



B

1…K×f4??

A terrible error! The black king will be cut off along the f-file now, and the g7-pawn will be inevitably lost.

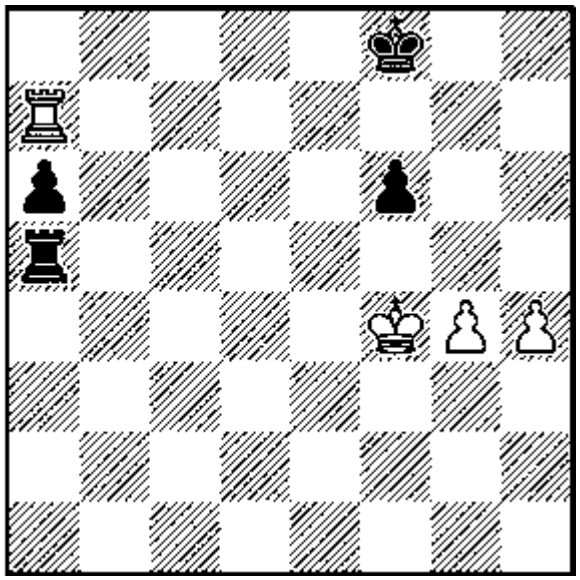
The simplest way to a draw was 1…Kg6 2 Kg4 (2 f5+ K×f5 3 R×g7 Ra1 4 Rf7+ Kg6=) 2…Ra4 3 Rd6+ Kf7.

Another way was 1…g6 2 Rf7+ Ke4 3 Kg4 (3 Rf6 Ra1 4 Kg3 Rg1+ 5 Kh2 Rg4; 3 f5 gf 4 g6 f4 5 g7 Rg3) 3…Ra1 4 Re7+ Kd5 5 Rg7 Ke4! 6 R×g6 Rg1+, and in case of 7 Kh4?? Kf3! White's king will be mated.

2 Rf7+ Ke5 3 Kh5!+– Ra6 4 R×g7 Ra5 5 Re7+ Kf5 6 Rf7+ Ke6 7 Rf1 Ra8 8 g6 Rh8+ 9 Kg5 Ke7 10 Re1+ (10 g7) **10…Kf8 11 Kf6 Rh6** (11…Rh7!? 12 Re8+!) **12 Re2** Black resigned.

Chigorin – Tarrasch
Budapest 1896

9-91



B

In the game, Black let the hostile king penetrate into his camp; this caused a rapid loss.

1…Ra1?? 2 Kf5 Rf1+ 3 Kg6 Rf4 4 g5! fg (4…R×h4 5 Ra8+ Ke7 6 gf+) **5 hg Ra4**

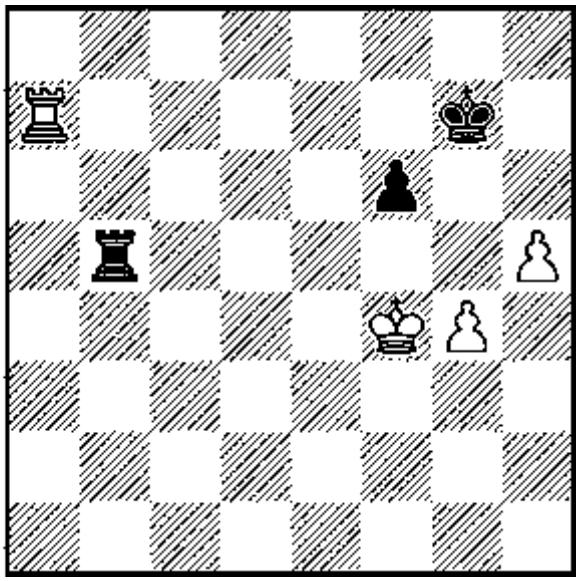
Both 5…Kg8 6 Ra8+ Rf8 7 R×f8+ K×f8 8 Kh7 and 5…Rg4 6 R×a6 Rg1 7 Ra8+ Ke7 8 Rg8! are hopeless.

6 Ra8+ Ke7 7 Kh6 a5 8 g6 Ra1 9 g7 Rh1+ 10 Kg6 Rg1+ 11 Kh7 Rh1+ 12 Kg8 Ra1 13 Ra7+ Ke8 14 Ra6 Rh1 (14…Ke7 15 Kh7 Rh1+ 16 Rh6) **15 R×a5 Re1 16 Rh5 Rg1 17 Re5+ Kd7 18 Kh7** Black resigned.

The rook had to watch the fifth rank. The a6-pawn is not necessary for Black: its existence is not essential for a draw.

After 1…Kg8! 2 h5, the most solid defense was suggested by Fridstein: 2…Rb5!? 3 R×a6 Kg7 4 Ra7+

9-92



B

4…Kg8 5 h6 Rc5 6 Rg7+ Kf8! (6…Kh8? 7 Rf7 Rc6 8 Kf5+–) 7 Rg6 (7 Kg3 Rc1=) 7…Kf7 8 h7 Rc8 9 Rh6 Kg7 (9…Rh8? 10 Kf5 Kg7 11 Rh1 Kf7 12 Ra1+–) 10 Rh1 Ra8 and White cannot strengthen his position, because 11 Kf5 is met by 11…Ra5+. Moreover, as noted by Vardan Pogosyan, the king is not obliged to retreat to the eighth rank: after 4…Kh6!? 5 Rf7 Rb6 (5…Rb4+) 6 Kf5 Rb5+ 7 K:f6 Rb4!, a drawn position has arisen on the board, familiar to us through the analysis of the Polgar-Short ending (9-89).

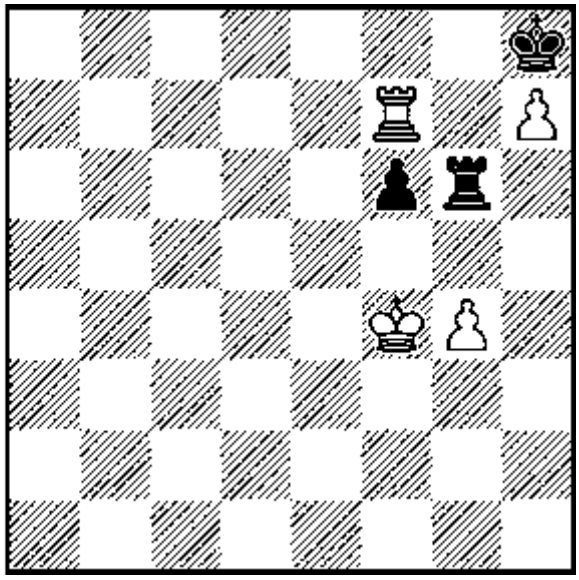
In the line 2…Kf8 3 h6 Kg8 4 Rg7+ Kf8 5 Rg6 Kf7 6 h7 Ra4+ 7 Kg3 Ra3+ 8 Kh4 Ra1 9 h8N+ Kf8 10 R×f6+ Kg7 11 Kg5 K×h8 (11…Ra5+? 12 Rf5 R×f5+ 13 gf K×h8 14 Kf6!+–) 12 Kg6

White, according to the *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings*, should win. However it is a mystery to me how he can do it after 12…Kg8 13 Rb6 (13 g5 Rb1 14 R×a6 Rb8=) 13…Kf8 14 g5 a5.

Also playable is 2…Rg5 3 R×a6 Kg7 4 Ra7+ (4 h6+ Kg6!=, but not 4…K×h6? 5 R×f6+ Rg6 6 Kf5!+–) 4…Kg8 5 h6 Rg6 6 h7+ Kh8 7 Rf7

9-93

B?



Black should not cling to the f6-pawn. He achieves a draw by means of 7…Rg5! 8 R×f6 Ra5 (8…Rg7 9 Rh6 Ra7=) 9 Rh6 (9 Rf7 Ra4+ 10 Kg5 R×g4+) 9…Ra4+ 10 Kg5 Ra5+ 11 Kh4 Ra7= or 11…Ra1=. The other way Black can save himself was shown by David Navara: 7…f5! 8 g5 (8 gf Rg4+!) 8…Ra6=.

After 7…Rh6? 8 Kf5! Black loses. The game Malisauskas-Sandler (USSR 1977) continued: 8…Rh4 (8…Rh5+ 9 Kg6! Rg5+ 10 Kh6+–) 9 Rd7 (9 R×f6? R×h7!=; 9 g5? fg 10 Kg6 Rf4=) 9…Rh6 10 Re7 (a simpler way is 10 Ra7⊙ Rh4 11 g5! fg 12 Kg6+–) 10…Rh4 11 g5 Rh5 12 Kg6??

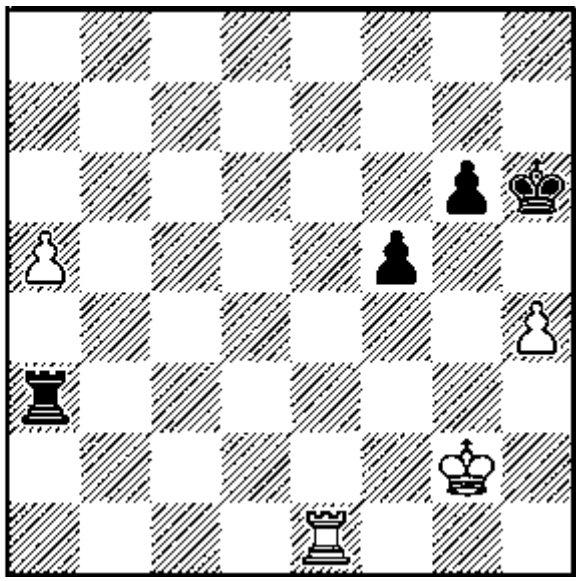
A gross error just when a step away from a win. 12 Re8+! K×h7 13 K×f6 was decisive.

12…R×g5+ 13 Kh6 Re5! 14 Rf7 Re8 15 Kg6 Rd8 Draw.

Exercises

9-94

9/14
W?

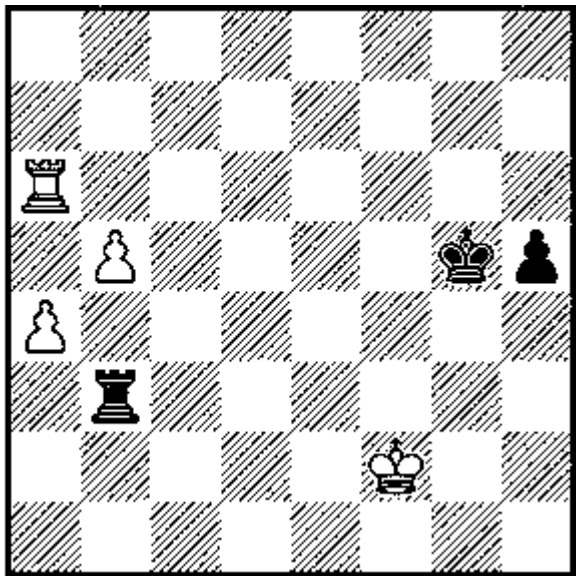


Pawns on Opposite Wings

A common situation is when one side has two connected passed pawns while the adversary has a far-advanced pawn on the opposite wing. In these endgames, correct placement of one’s pieces is highly important.

N. Grigoriev, 1936*

9-95



W

White has so-called self-propelled pawns. However, a lot of time is required for promotion, so Black manages to create counterplay in time.

1 b6 (△ 2 Ra5+, 3 Rb5)

1 Rd6 Rb2+ 2 Ke3 h4 does not bring any success either.

1…Kf4 2 a5 Rb2+ 3 Ke1 (3 Kg1 Kg3) **3…h4 4 Ra7 h3 5 Rh7 h2 6 R×h2**

6 Kd1 is met by 6…Kg3! 7 Kc1 Rb5.

6…R×h2 7 b7

A typical situation: the rook cannot stop the pawns, but Black nevertheless manages to hold by pursuing the hostile king, which is pressed to the edge of the board.

7…Ke3 8 Kf1 (8 Kd1 Kd3 9 Kc1 Kc3 10 Kb1?? Rb2+) **8…Kf3 9 Ke1**=

The careless 9 Kg1?? even loses: 9…Rg2+! 10 Kh1 (10 Kf1 Rb2) 10…Rb2 11 a6 Kg3.

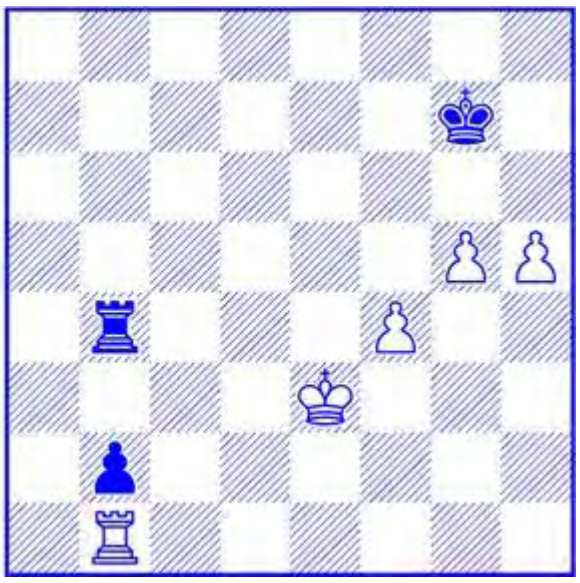
In this example, White's pieces were "engaged in a strange role reversal." As a rule, ***the king should support his own connected passed pawns while the rook's mission is to hinder the hostile pawn.***

The rook's placement is extremely important. ***If the rook of the stronger side is placed passively (in front of the enemy's pawn) a draw can be achieved simply by placing the king in front of the connected pair of pawns.***

Some time ago I was quite impressed by a discovery that the former world champion produced during our joint analytical work.

V. Smyslov, 1976

9-96



B

White has three finely placed connected passed pawns, but still the win is problematic.

1…Rb3+ 2 Kd4 (2 Kd2 Rb4 3 f5 Rb5= is no better.) **2…Rb4+ 3 Kc3 R×f4 4 R×b2 Rh4! 5 Rb7+ Kg8 6 Rb8+** (6 h6 Rg4) **6…Kg7!**

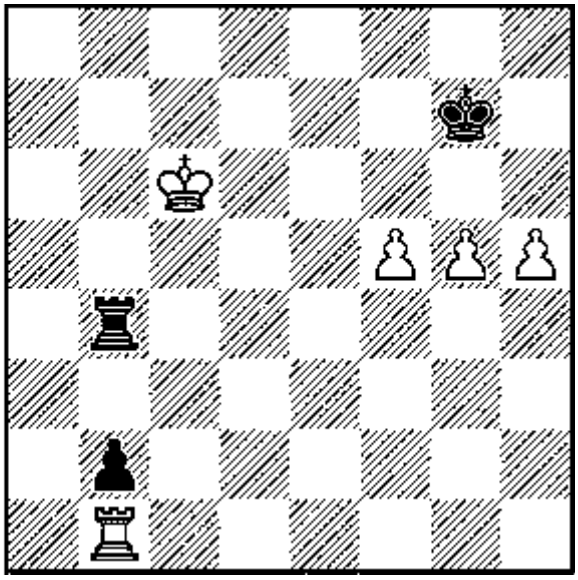
But not 6…Kf7(h7)? 7 g6+, coming to a winning Kasparian position (see diagram 9-56).

7 h6+ Kg6 8 Rg8+ Kh7 9 Rg7+ Kh8 10 Re7 Rg4 11 Re5 Kh7 12 Kd3 Kg6=

The most White could achieve is the drawn Kling and Horwitz position (diagram 9-55).

Many years later, Karsten Müller showed that White still has a complicated path to victory. He suggested 2 Ke4 Rb4+ 3 Kf5 Rb5+ 4 Ke6 (4 Kg4 Rb4 is useless) 4…Rb6+ 5 Kd5 Rb5+ 6 Kc6 Rb4 7 f5.

9-97



B

7…Rg4 8 h6+ Kh7 9 R×b2 R×g5 10 Rf2+–. If Black temporizes, 7…Rb8 8 h6+ Kh7, then the most exact way is 9 Kd5! (but not 9 Kc5? Rg8! 10 g6+ K×h6 11 R×b2 Kg5 12 Rf2 Kf6=) 9…Rb4 10 Ke5 (and now, thanks to zugzwang, Black must allow the king back into the lower half of the board) 10…Rb5+ 11 Kf4 Rb4+ 12 Kg3 Rb5 13 Kg4 Rb3 14 Kh4⊙+–.

I will note here, that with Black's pawn on the a-file, Müller's plan is not dangerous, so the position remains drawn.

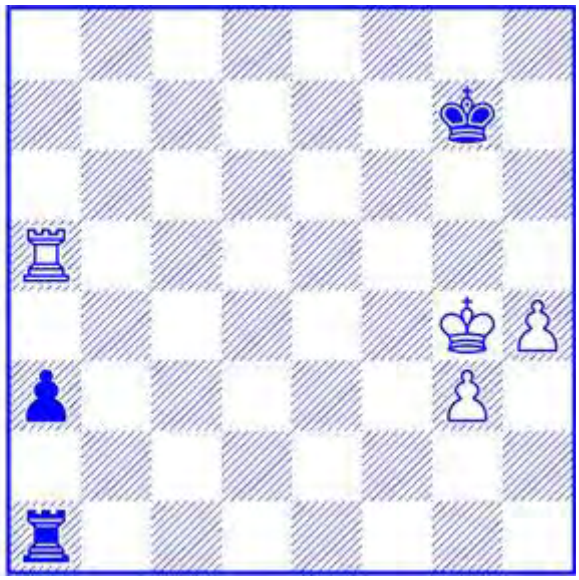
Clearly, the problems with the realization of White's material advantage were obviously caused by the poor position of White's rook. Tarrasch's famous rule is perfectly on point here: ***Place your rook behind the passed pawn, whether it is yours or your adversary's***. Thereby the rook can retain utmost activity.

Tarrasch's rule is valid for the overwhelming majority of rook-and-pawn endings but, as it goes without saying, not for absolutely all of them. Generally speaking, there is no rule in chess which does not have an exception.

An amateur followed Tarrasch's rule in a correspondence game and had to resign immediately after receiving his opponent's reply. He wrote an irritated letter to the grandmaster: "I relied upon your authority but lost because of you, with your stupid rule…"

Tarrasch published it in his chess column with the final position of that game, adding the following annotation: "Especially for this reader and a few similar to him (the majority, as I am sure, do not need it), I supplement my rule. You should always place your rook behind a pawn. Except for the cases when this is unfavorable!"

9-98



This is a very important type of position. The black king stands in front of connected passed pawns but the white rook is placed behind Black's passed pawn. In such cases, the chances of the defender are minimal. However, this position can be saved if Black is on move.

1…a2 2 h5 Kh7 (but by no means 2…Kh6?? 3 Ra7!⊙+–) **3 Kg5 Rg1! 4 Ra7+ Kg8 5 R×a2 R×g3+**

The happy end resulted from the fact that one of the pawns had been standing on the third rank. If White is on move, he succeeds in advancing the pawn and wins without difficulty: 1 Kg5 a2 2 g4 Kf7 3 h5 Kg7 4 Ra7+ Kf8 5 h6 Kg8 6 Kg6 – Black has no time for 6…Rg1 on account of the threatened mate.

If the pawn is on g2, White wins no matter who is on move. He simply advances his king and the h-pawn. The riposte …Rg1 is useless because the white rook, capturing the a2-pawn, will protect the g2-pawn.

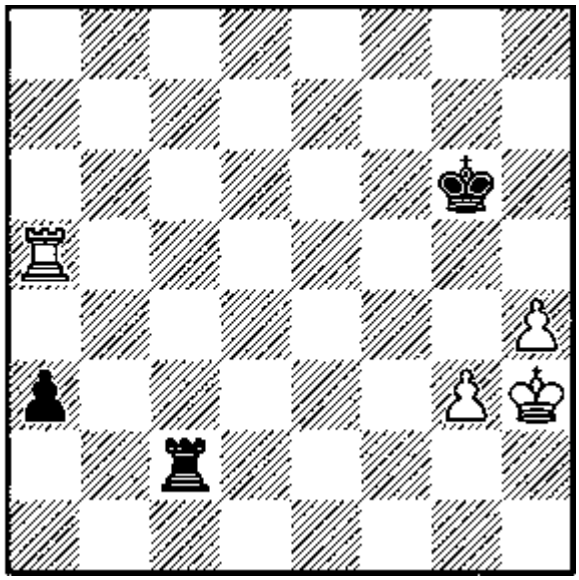
Finally, Black has no draw against the following White setup: pawns on h3-g4 and king on h4. After 1…a2 2 Ra6 Kh7 3 g5 Kg7 3 Kh5 Rh1 4 Ra7+ Kf8(g8) 5 R×a2 R×h3+ 6 Kg6, a winning endgame with a g-pawn arises.

In some cases, the weaker side holds when his rook protects his pawn from the side.

Tarrasch – Chigorin
St. Petersburg m (9) 1893

9-99
$

B?



The game continued 1…Ra2? 2 Kg4 Ra1 3 Ra6+ Kf7 4 Kg5 a2 5 g4! (of course, not 5 h5?? Rg1=), and Black soon resigned.

We would like to mention another, much more complicated winning method: 2 g4 Ra1 3 Ra6+ Kg7 4 h5 a2 5 Kh2!!. Just so, in order to have, after 5…Kh7 6 g5 Rb1 7 Ra7+ Kg8 8 R×a2 Rb5, the protective move 9 Rg2!+–.

As Maizelis proved, the diagrammed position is drawn (however against a more favorable setup of White's pawns, at h3 and g4, Black has no chances).

1…a2! 2 h5+

If the pawn stepped ahead without giving a check (e.g., with the black king on f6), the move 2…Rc5! would have led to an immediate draw. Well, let us make use of this idea later, when the white pawns reach a higher rank.

2…Kf6 3 Kh4! (3 g4 Rc5! 4 R×a2 Kg5=) **3…Rh2+ 4 Kg4 Rb2 5 Ra6+ Kg7 6 Kg5 Rb5+ 7 Kh4 Rb2 8 g4** (9 h6+ is threatened) **8…Kf7! 9 Ra4**

9 h6 Rb6! 10 Ra7+ Kg6= is nonsensical.

9…Kg7!

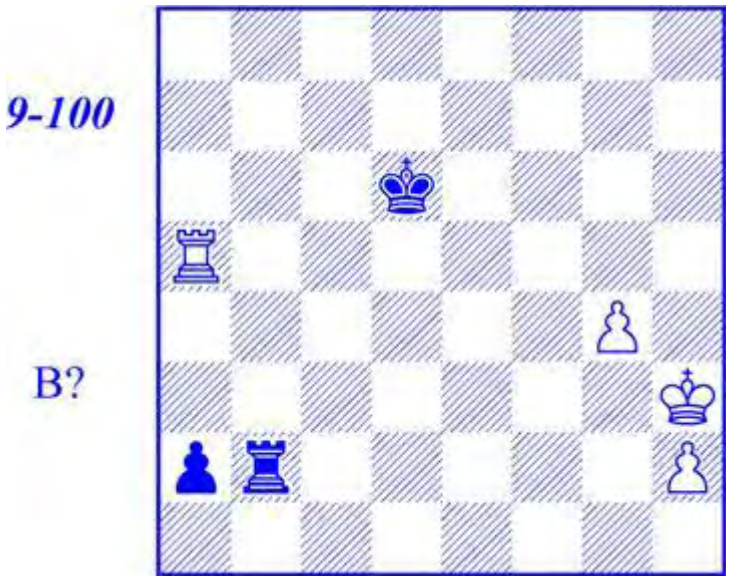
Rather than 9…Rc2? 10 h6 Kg6 11 Ra6+ Kh7 12 Kh5+–.

10 Ra7+ (10 Ra6 Kf7!) **10…Kf6! 11 g5+ Kf5 12 h6 Rh2+ 13 Kg3 Rh1 14 R×a2 K×g5**=.

Sometimes the weaker side employs another, more active defensive method: the king is advanced to support the passed pawn. As a consequence, this pawn will cost a whole rook for the stronger side, but in the meantime his own pawns, together with the king, will be advanced too far, and the endgame "two connected passed pawn against a rook" turns out to be winning.

Therefore this tactic has practical chances only against less advanced pawns and misplaced pieces of the stronger side. As, for example, in the following case:

Reshevsky – Alekhine
AVRO 1938



It would have been an easy draw for Black with the white rook on a1: 1…Ke6 2 Kg3 Kf6. In our case, however, a passive defense is hopeless: 1…Ke6? 2 Kg3 Kf6 3 h3 Kg6 (or 3…Rc2 4 Kh4 Rh2 5 Ra6+ Ke5 6 Kg5! R×h3 7 R×a2 Rh8 8 Re2+ Kd6 9 Kf6+–) 4 Kh4 Rh2 5 Ra6+ Kg7 6 g5 Kh7 7 Kg4 followed by h4, Kh5 etc.

1…Kc6! 2 Kg3

If 2 g5, then 2…Rb5! 3 Ra6+ Kb7 4 R×a2 R×g5 5 Rc2 Rg8=. The evaluation of the final position of this line is not quite obvious because we have not studied defense by frontal attack against a rook pawn. I think it is pertinent to say here that, with an h2-pawn, White has winning chances only when the black king is cut off on the a-file.

2…Kb6 3 Ra8 Kb5 4 h3

In case of 4 g5 both 4…Kb4 (△ Rb3+) and the immediate 4…Rb3+ are good.

4…Kb4 5 Kf4

The consequences of 5 Kh4 are harder to calculate, but its result is still a draw: 5…Kb3 6 g5 (6

Kg5 Rb1 7 h4 a1Q 8 R×a1 R×a1 9 h5 Kc4 10 h6 Kd5 11 Kg6 Ke5=) 6…Rb1 7 Kh5 a1Q 8 R×a1 R×a1 9 g6 Kc4 10 g7 Rg1 11 Kh6 Kd5 12 Kh7 Ke6 13 g8Q R×g8 14 K×g8 Kf5=.

5…Rc2!

As is presumed in endgames with a faradvanced passed pawn, Black speculates on the threat of interference, namely 6…Rc4+, 7…Rc5(c3)+ and 8…Ra5(a3).

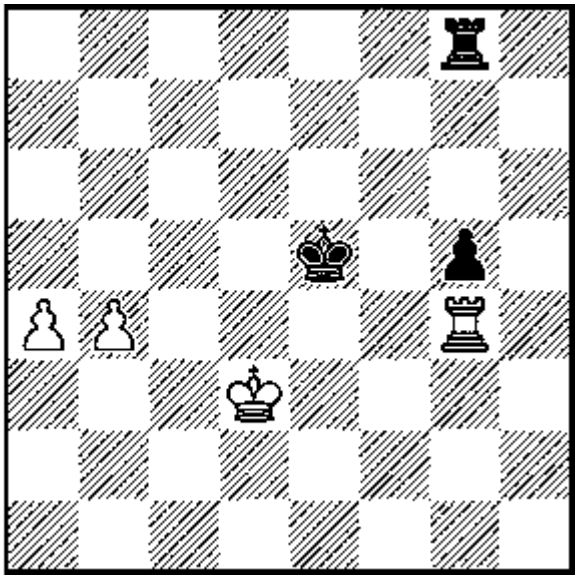
6 Rb8+ Kc3 7 Ra8 Kb4! Draw.

Of course, there is no reason for Black to play 7…Kb2, but he seems not to be losing even after that move: 8 h4 a1Q 9 R×a1 K×a1 10 h5 Rh2 11 Kg5 Kb2 12 Kh6 Kc3 13 g5 Kd4 14 g6 Ke5 15 g7 Rg2 16 Kh7 Kf6=.

Tragicomedies

Dreev – Ehlvest
USSR chsf, Tallinn 1986

9-101



B?

As we know, when the white rook is passive, the black king should be placed on the queenside. However, after 1…Kd5?! 2 a5 △ Kc3-b3-a4, Black is very probably lost. At the proper moment, the rook abandons the blockade square g4 in order to create threats to the king. Vulfson analyzed a similar endgame in detail in the book by Dvoretsky and Yusupov, *Technique for the Tournament Player*.

It is important to push the g-pawn at least a single step forward in order to reduce the active possibilities of the white rook.

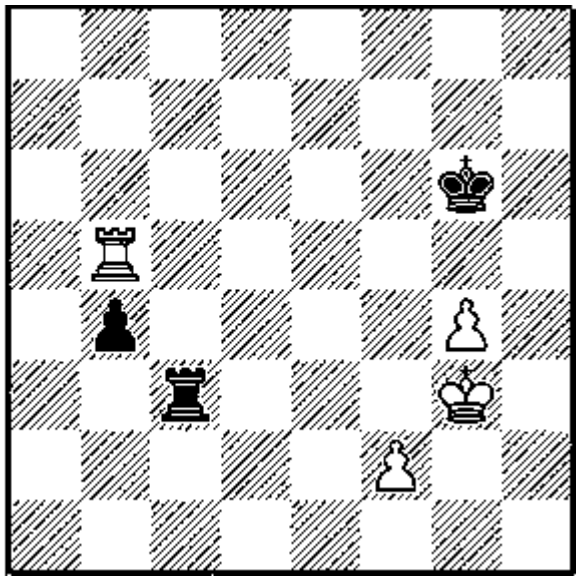
1…Kf5 2 Rg1 g4 3 Kc4 g3?

But now the king fails to come back to the queenside in time. Black had to play 3…Ke6! 4 Rg3 (in case of 4 Kc5 he could resort to frontal checks: 4…Rc8+!?) 4…Kd6 5 b5 Kc7 6 a5 Kb7=.

3 Kd5!+– (shouldering!) **3…Rd8+ 4 Kc6 Rc8+ 5 Kb7 Rg8 6 a5 Rg7+ 7 Kb6 Ke5 8 a6 Rg6+ 9 Kc5 Black resigned.**

Ostermeyer – Dueball
BRD ch, Mannheim 1975

9-102



W

1 Kg2?

An odd move: in endgames, the king should go forward, not backward. 1 f3 suggested itself, for example, 1…b3 (1…Rc4 2 f4 or 2 Rb6+ △ 3 f4) 2 Kf4 (△ Rb6+) 2…Rc4+ (side checks are not efficient because the rook and the f3-pawn are only separated by two files) 3 Ke3 Rc3+ 4 Ke4 Kf6 (4…Rc4+ 5 Kd3 Rf4 6 Ke3) 5 f4 Rc4+ 6 Ke3 Rc3+ 7 Kd4 Rg3 8 Rb6+ and 9 g5+–. White is playing in accordance with a principle that, in Nimzovitch's opinion, is a cornerstone of correct endgame strategy: ***the collective advance!***

1…b3 2 f4??

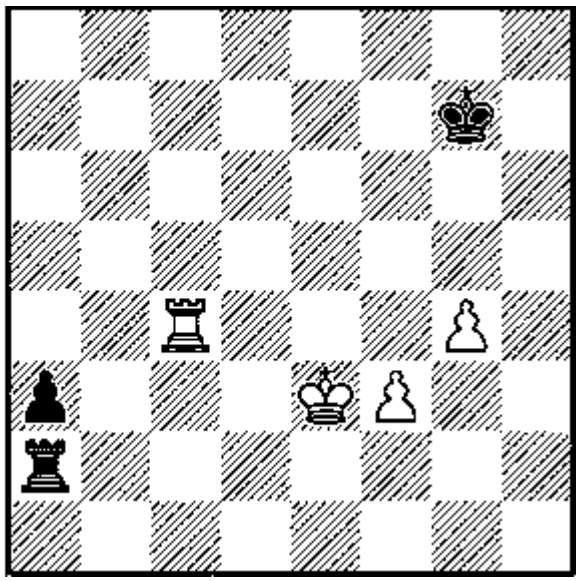
A severe positional error: the king will be cut off from the pawns forever. It was still not too late for 2 f3! △ 3 Kg3+–.

2…Kf6= 3 Rb6+ Kf7 4 g5 Kg7 5 f5 Rc5! 6 Rb7+ Kg8 7 Rb8+

Draw. After 7…Kg7 8 f6+ Black can play either 8…Kf7 or 8…Kg6 9 Rg8+ Kf7 10 Rg7+ Kf8.

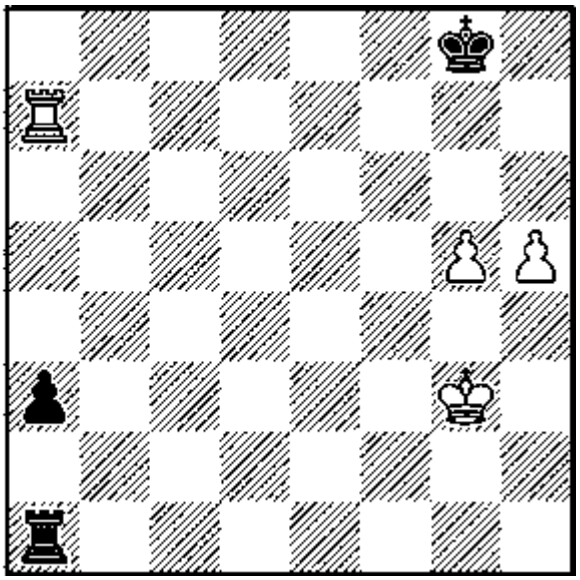
Exercises

9-103



9/15
B?

9-104



9/16
W?

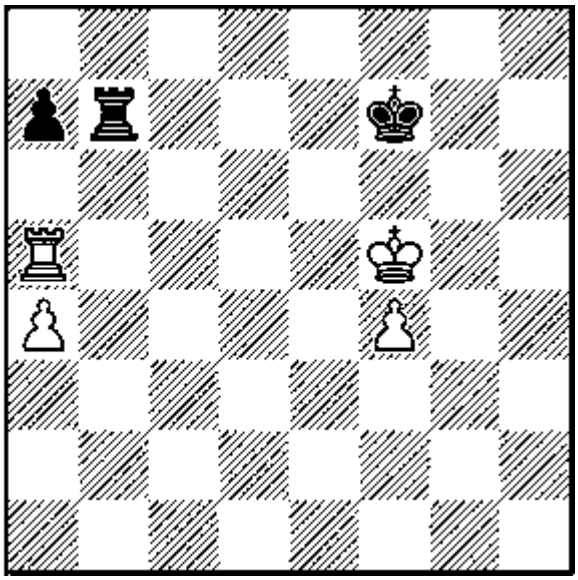
Disconnected Pawns, One of Them Is Passed

If one or two files separate pawns of the stronger side, the position is most often a draw. We shall analyze cases of more interest and practical value here: when the distance between pawns is great enough.

The defender must aspire for active counterplay. If his rook must merely defend his own pawn or protect the king from checks, his salvation is very problematic.

Miles – Webb
Birmingham 1975

9-105



W

1 Ra6 Rc7 2 Kg5 Kg7 3 f5 Rd7 4 a5 Rc7 5 Rd6!

White has improved his position to the maximum degree. Now he has in mind a typical plan for this sort of position, a usurpation of the seventh rank (a5-a6 and Rd6-d8-b8-b7).

5…Kf8 6 Rd8+ Ke7 7 Rh8 Kd6 8 Kg6 Rc1 9 Ra8

A wise technique: White combines the threat of advancing the f-pawn with an attack against the a-pawn.

9…Ke5 10 Re8+ Kf4 (10…Kd6 11 Re6+ Kd7 12 Ra6+–) **11 f6 Rg1+ 12 Kf7 Ra1 13 Kg7 Kf5 14 f7 Rg1+ 15 Kf8 Kg6 16 Re6+** Black resigned.

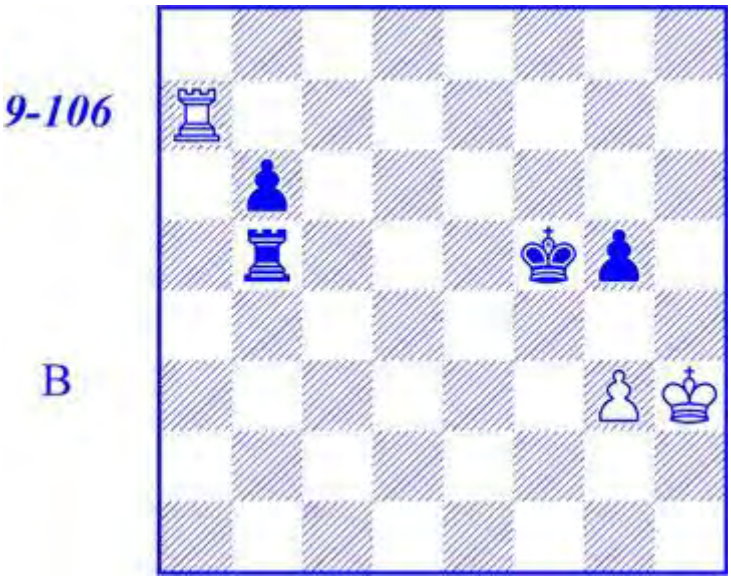
I would like to draw your attention to the fact that if the queenside pawns were placed not on the same file, but on adjacent files (for example, the white pawn on the b-file), the black rook would have been less passive. It could then combine its defensive mission with a counterattacking one, and the drawing chances would have been considerably greater.

A typical method of bringing home a material advantage is the protection of all of one's

pawns by the rook from the side.

Tsouros – Minev

Greece – Bulgaria m tt 1973



1…Rd5!–+

Black wants to play …b6-b5; thereafter the king, being released from its troubles with the g5-pawn, will set off for the queenside. White is helpless against this simple plan. Other setups are much less efficient.

2 Rf7+ (2 Re7 b5 3 Re8 Re5) **2…Ke4 3 Rb7 b5 4 Kg4 Kd4 5 Kf3**

5 Kh5 Kc4 6 g4 b4 7 Rc7+ Rc5 is equally hopeless.

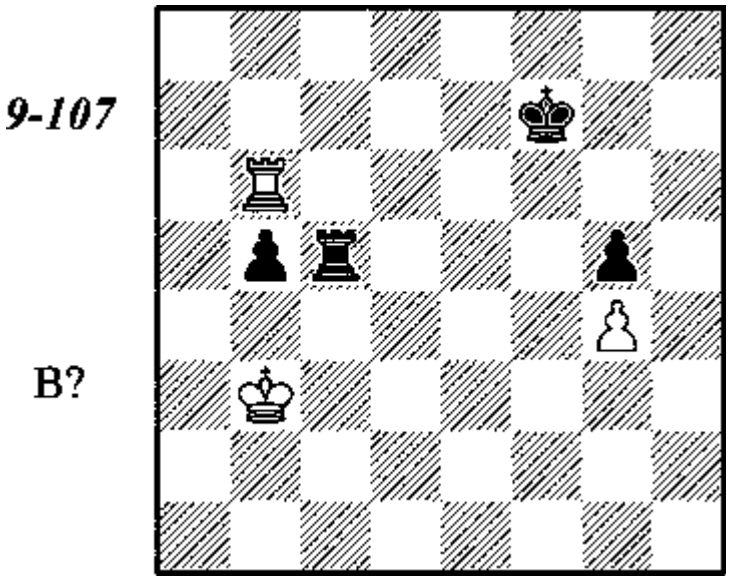
5…Kc4 6 Ke4 Rc5 7 Rd7 b4 8 Rd1 b3 9 Rb1 Kc3 10 Rc1+ Kb4 11 Rb1 Rc4+ 12 Kf5 g4 13 Kg5 Kc3 White resigned.

If the rook protects pawns from the side and the enemy king blocks the passed pawn, then the pieces of the stronger side attack the opponent's pawn on the other wing, while the passed pawn, if necessary, can be sacrificed.

An interesting example of this strategy follows in the next diagram. Studying it, we should refresh our memories about the theory of rook and pawn versus rook endgames, particularly the case of frontal attack.

Rigan – Yandemirov

Budapest 1993



According to the above-mentioned rule, Black must attack the g4-pawn. But how is he to do this? His king is cut off along the sixth rank, while 1…Rc4? will be met by 2 R×b5 R×g4 3 Kc3 Kg6 4 Kd3 Rf4 5 Rb1 (5 Ke3=) 5…g4 (5…Kh5 6 Ke3=) 6 Ke3! (rather than 6 Ke2? Kg5 7 Rf1 g3!) 6…Rf5 7 Ke2! △ 8 Rf1=.

1…Kg7!!

A superb waiting move that puts White in zugzwang. His rook is placed optimally and cannot abandon its post. In case of 2 Kb4 Rc4+ 3 K×b5 R×g4 4 Kc5 Rh4! (the only method of crossing the sixth rank with the king) 5 Kd5 Rh6 6 Rb1 Kg6 7 Ke4 Rh3!, the king is cut off along the rank, and this fact is decisive.

2 Kb2 Rc4 3 R×b5 Kf6!

This is why the white king should have been pushed back! The rook is not hanging now, and Black manages to improve his king's position without letting White do the same. If 4 Rf5+ Kg6 5 Rf1, then 5…R×g4 6 Kc3 Rg2! 7 Kd3 Kh5 8 Ke3 Kg4–+.

4 Kb3 R×g4 5 Kc3 Re4 6 Kd3 Re8

In a very similar position from the game Tal-I. Zaitsev (diagram 9-34), 6…Re1!? 7 Kd2 Re8 was played, but in our current case Black can even do without it.

7 Kd2

7 Rb1 is met by 7…g4! 8 Rb5 (8 Kd2 Kg5! 9 Re1 R×e1 10 K×e1 Kh4) 8…g3 9 Kd2 Re4! 10 Rb3 Rg4 11 Rb1 g2 12 Rg1 Kg5 13 Ke2 Kh4 14 Kf2 Kh3–+.

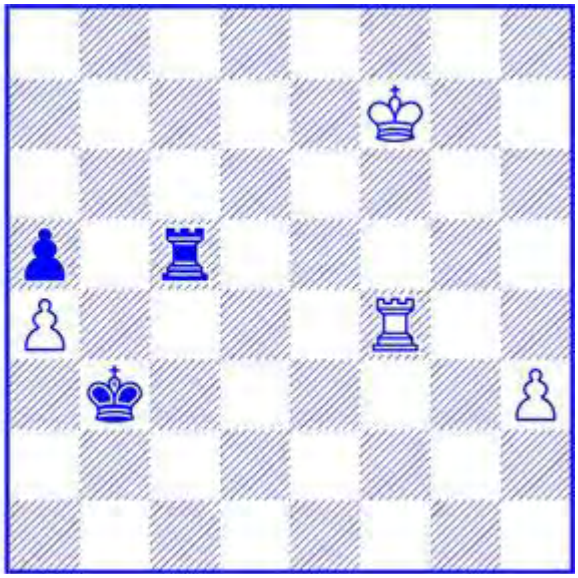
7…Kg6 (7…g4 is also good) **8 Rb1 Re5!** (8…g4?? 9 Re1=) **9 Rg1 Kh5** (9…Kf5!?) White resigned.

As was said earlier, only an active defense gives the weaker side chances of salvation. We would like to emphasize two of the most important defensive methods:

(1) The king's attack against a pawn. Sometimes one succeeds in giving the rook up for a pawn, eating another pawn with the king and saving the game with a pawn against a rook.

(2) Exchange of rooks. If the eventual pawn endgame is drawn, the weaker side drives away the hostile rook, from the rank where it is protecting both pawns, by means of the exchange threat. These methods are often combined.

9-108



B?

1…Rc7+ 2 Kg6 Rb7 3 h4 Rb4! 4 Kg5

After 4 R×b4+ ab! 5 a5 Kc4 6 a6 b3 7 a7 b2 8 a8Q b1Q+, a drawn queen-and-pawn endgame arises.

4…K×a4 5 h5 Ka3!

But, of course, not 5…Kb5(b3)?? 6 R×b4+ ab 7 h6+–.

6 h6 Rb8 7 h7 a4 8 Rh4 Rh8 9 Kg6 Kb3 10 Kg7 R×h7+ 11 K×h7 a3 Draw.

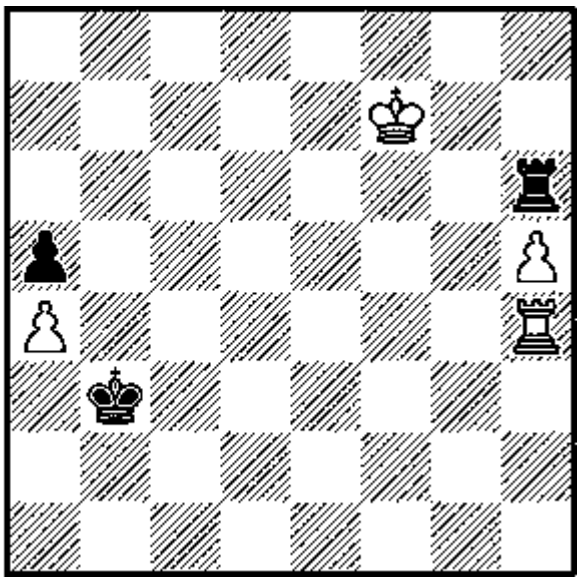
Had Frank Marshall been able to divine his opponent's intent, he could have neutralized it by playing 2 Kf6(e6)! Rb7 3 Ke5!. Here Black is in a bad way, as the exchange of rooks does not

work: 3…Rb4 4 R×b4+ ab 5 a5 Kc3 6 a6 b3 7 a7 b2 8 a8Q b1Q 9 Qf3+ Kd2 (9…Kc4 10 Qc6+) 10 Qf2+ Kc3 11 Qd4+ and the queens come off.

The plan of transferring the rook to b4 is nevertheless correct. However, as Igor Zaitsev has noted, it has to be implemented somewhat differently. 1…Rc6!! leads to the draw (preventing the white king from advancing to the center) 2 h4 Rb6 (threatening 3…Rb4=) 3 h5 Rh6! 4 Rh4

9-109

B?



4…Ka3! 5 Kg7 R×h5 (the rook sacrifice did not work a move earlier; Black had to wait until the king was on g7) 6 R×h5 K×a4 7 Kf6 Kb4=.

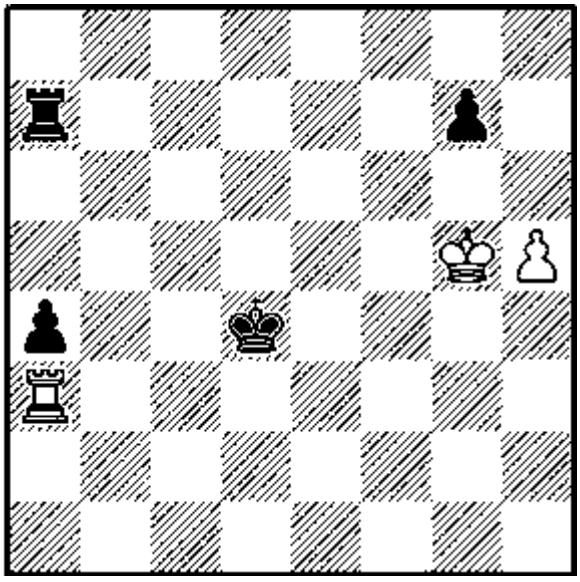
The following example, as well as the exercises in this section, show how difficult precise calculation can be in this sort of position.

Taimanov – Averbakh

Leningrad 1947

9-110

B



Deliberating over the natural continuation 1…Kc4! over the board, Black decided that he could get no more than a draw on account of 2 Kg6 Kb4 3 Rg3 a3 4 Rg2 a2 5 R×a2 R×a2 6 K×g7=.

Later on, Averbakh found an improvement: 4…Rc7! (instead of 4…a2?) 5 Kh7 (5 Rg4+ Kb3 6 Rg3+ Kb2) 5…Rc5! 6 Kg6 (6 Rh2 Rg5 7 Rh4+ Kb5) 6…Kb3 7 Rg3+ Kb2 8 Rg2+ Rc2 (this is why the zwischenzug 5…Rc5! was necessary – the king prevents a rook capture on g7) 9 Rg1 Rh2! (from here, the rook defends the g7-pawn indirectly and, at the same time, protects the king from checks along files and ranks) 10 Rg5 a2 11 Rb5+ Kc1 12 Ra5 Rg2+ 13 Kh7 Kb1 14 Rb5+ Rb2 15 Ra5 Rb7–+.

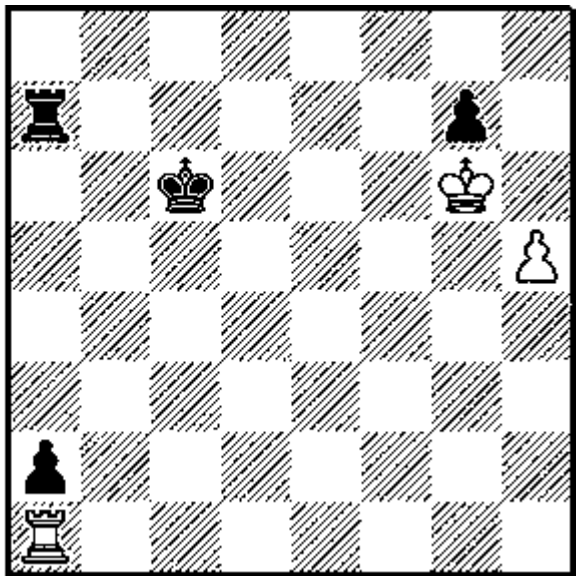
The move 4 Rg2 is not forced, but 4 Rg1 a2 5 Ra1 Kb3 6 Rg1 is even worse. Curiously enough,

Minev, in the *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings*, annotating a similar endgame from Marshall-Duras, San Sebastian 1912, evaluated this position as drawn, although 6…Rc7! is quite a simple win.

The rook is a long-range piece that is capable of driving the enemy king with checks far away from the decisive area. Therefore let us consider 4 Rg4+!?.

The line 4…Kc3 5 Rg3+ Kd4? 6 R×a3! R×a3 7 K×g7 Ke5 (7…Rg3+ 8 Kf7 Rh3 9 Kg6 Ke5 10 h6 Ke6 11 Kg7!=) 8 h6 Kf5 (8…Ra7+ 9 Kg6!) 9 h7 Ra7+ 10 Kh6!= leads to an immediate draw.

If 4…Kb5, then 5 Rg5+! (5 Rg2 Rc7!) 5…Kc6 6 Rg1 a2 7 Ra1



What can Black undertake? In case of 7…Kc5, both 8 Rc1+ Kb4 9 Rg1 Rc7! and 8 R×a2 R×a2 9 K×g7 Rg2+! (a familiar tool: zwischenschach for gaining a tempo) 10 Kf6 (after 10 Kh7, White will also be too late) 10…Rh2! 11 Kg6 Kd6 12 h6 Ke7 13 h7 Kf8 are bad. Summing up: a rook sacrifice for the a-pawn holds when the black king is on d4, c4, or b5, but not on c5 or c6.

Let us try the waiting move 8 Kh7!. Now 8…Kc4 9 R×a2!= is useless; 8…g5+ 9 Kg6 g4 10 h6 g3 11 h7 R×h7 12 K×h7 g2 is not dangerous for White either, because the black pawns are too far away from each other (look at diagram 8-33 again).

8…Kd5 is the strongest. After 9 Kg6, Black does not play 9…Ke5 10 Re1+! (10 Kh7? Kf5) 10…Kd4 11 Ra1! △ 12 R×a2 (the king is too late approaching the pawn). Instead, he has 9…Kd6!. This position could have been reached two moves earlier, if Black had played 7…Kd6! (instead of 7…Kc5).

At first I did not see any danger for White here either: 10 Kh7! (10 Rd1+? is bad because of 10…Ke7! 10 Ra1 Kf8 followed by …Ra6+) 10…Ke5 11 Kg6. However, grandmaster Müller finally discovered a winning continuation. Black suddenly sacrifices his g-pawn: 11…Ra6+!! 12 K×g7 Kf5 13 Kf7 (13 h6 Ra7+) 13…Kg5 14 Ke7 K×h5 and, as can easily be seen, his king comes to the queenside in time.

1…Ra6?! (The attempt to cut the king off from the g7-pawn does not work, although it does not spoil anything either).

2 Kf5 Kc4 3 Rg3!

This is the point! The line 3…a3 4 R×g7 a2 5 Rg1 leads only to a draw.

3…Rf6+

Black should have played 3…Ra7! 4 Kg6 Kb4 (rather than 4…a3? 5 R×a3) 5 Rg4+ Kc5! (5…Kb5 6 Rg3!) 6 Rg5+ (6 R×a4 R×a4 7 K×g7 Rg4+!) 6…Kc6(d6), transposing into situations that are already familiar to us. For example, 7 Rg2 (7 Rg1 a3) 7…a3 8 Ra2 (8 Rc2+ Kb5 9 Rg2 Rc7!) 8…Kc5! 9 Ra1 a2 10 Kh7 Kd5 11 Kg6 Kd6!, etc. “à la Müller.”

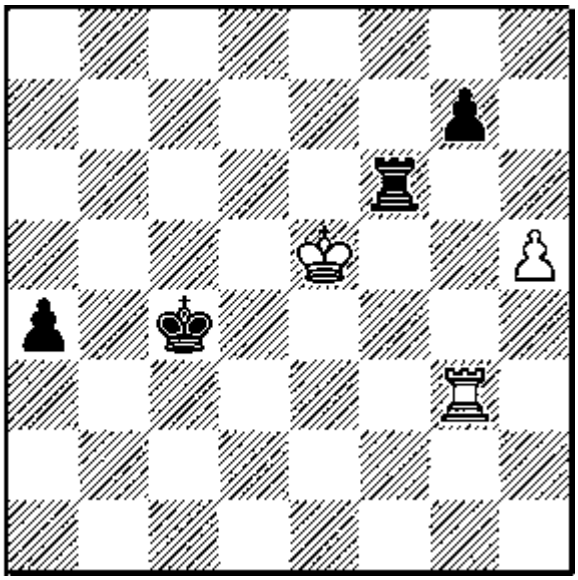
4 Ke5?!

In spite of Averbakh’s opinion, 4 Kg5 does not draw. Black should simply return with his rook to a6 (see the previous annotation).

Averbakh’s line, 4…Kb4 5 Rg4+ Kb3?! (5…Kb5! 6 Rg3 Ra6 7 Kf5 Ra7 8 Kg6 Kb4 9 Rg4+ Kc5!–+) 6 Rg3+ Kc2? 7. Rg2+? (7 Kh4! Rf7 8 Kg5 Ra7 9 Kg6 Kb2 10 Kh7 a3 11 R×g7=) 7…Kc1

8 Rg3 Ra6? (8…Kb2! 9 Rg2+ Kb3 10 Rg3+ Kb4 11 Rg4+ Kb5–+) 9 Kf5 Ra7, actually leads to a draw: 10 Kg6 Kb2, and now 11 Kh7! a3 12 R×g7= rather than 11 Rg2+? Kb3, etc.

9-112



B

4…Rh6??

As is known, the one who wins errs next to last (White's decisive error is still to come). Black should have played 4…Rf7! 5 Rg4+ Kb5 6 Rg3 Ra7 7 Kf5 a3 8 Kg6 a2 9 Rg1 Kc4 etc.

5 Rg4+ Kb3 6 Rg3+ Kc2 7 Rg2+ Kd3 8 Rg3+ Kc4 9 Rg4+ Kb5 10 R×g7??

The elementary 10 Kd4! led to an immediate draw. The capture is much weaker because Black maintains the possibility of interference with his rook along the sixth rank.

10…a3! 11 Ra7 (11 Rg1 R×h5+ 12 Kd4 Kb4 13 Rb1+ Ka4 14 Kc3 a2 15 Rg1 Ka3–+) **11…Ra6 12 Rb7+**

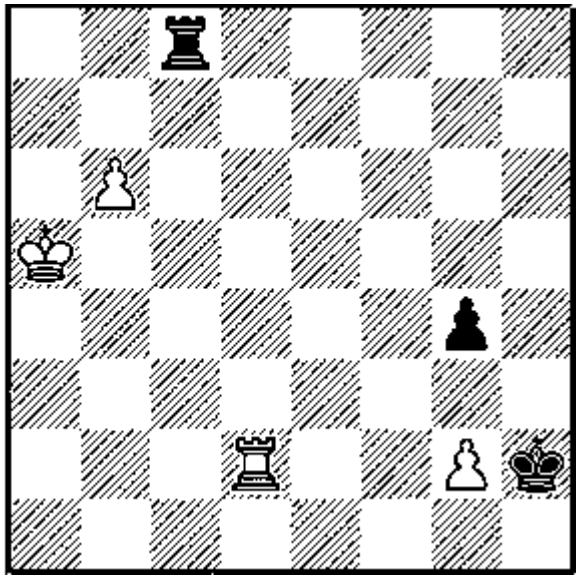
12 Rg7 a2 13 Rg1 did not help: 13…Rh6! 14 Ra1 (14 Kd4 Kb4) 14…R×h5+ 15 Kd4 Rh2 16 Kc3 Ka4–+.

12…Ka4 13 Rg7 Ra5+ 14 Kf6 a2 15 Rg4+ Kb3 (15…Kb5?? 16 Rg1=) **16 Rg3+ Kc4! 17 Rg4+ Kd3 18 Rg3+ Ke4 19 Rg4+ Ke3** (19…Kf3) **20 Rg1 R×h5 21 Rg3+ Kd4 22 Ra3 Rh2 23 Kf5 Rf2+ 24 Kg4 Kc4**, and White resigned soon.

Exercises

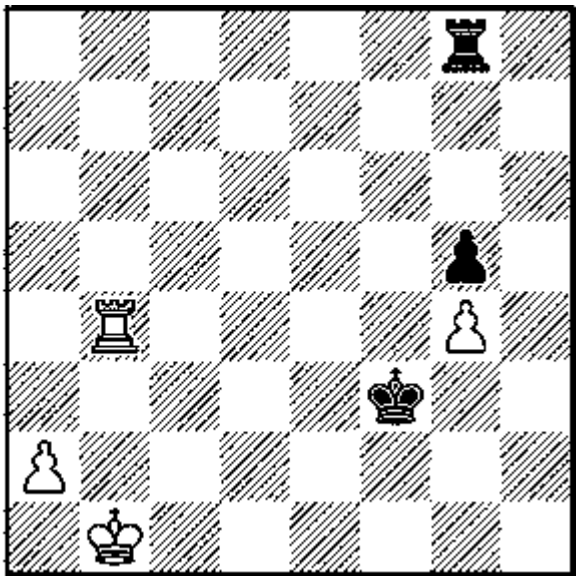
In both cases, your task is to find whether Black can achieve a draw.

9-113



9/17
B?

9-114



9/18
B?

Four Pawns vs. Three on the Same Wing

If all pawns are on the same wing, bringing the advantage home is frequently impossible (it is more precise to say, it should not be possible against correct defense). The fewer pawns, the easier the defense is.

For example, with three pawns against two or even with four against three, with standard pawn structures, the task of the defender is not too difficult (once in a lightning tournament I managed to hold two such endings, one against Tal and the other against Vasiukov). As for the case of five pawns against four, the probability of losing is much greater.

Petrosian – Keres
USSR ch, Moscow 1951

9-115

B

1…h5!

In this way Black makes his task of reaching a draw considerably easier. ***The defender should advance his h-pawn. The stronger side, whenever possible should prevent this by means of* g3-g4!**.

The explanation consists in the fact that White's most logical plan is an advance of his e- and f-pawns in order to create a passed pawn. To accomplish this plan, he must sooner or later play g3-g4, allowing a pawn exchange on g4. But, as we know, ***pawn exchanges are usually favorable for the weaker side, and improve the drawing chances.*** Without …h7-h5, the h-pawns would have stayed on the board.

In this game, Petrosian gradually carried out another plan: h2-h4 followed with f2-f3 and g3-g4, but also could not obtain victory.

2 Rc2 Kg7 3 Kg2 Rb5 4 Kf3 Kf6 5 h4 Rf5+ 6 Kg2 Ra5 7 Kh3 Ra4 8 Rd2 Ke5 9 Rb2 Kf6 10 Rb5 Ra2 11 Kg2 Ra4 12 Kf3 Ra3 13 Kf4 Ra2 14 f3 Re2 15 e4 Re1 16 Rb6+ Kg7 17 Ra6 Rb1 18 Rc6 Rg1 19 Rc2 Kf6 20 Ra2 Kg7 21 Re2 Kf6 22 Re3 Kg7 23 e5 Kf8 24 g4

If 24 Kg5, the simplest is 24…Kg7, although 24…R×g3+ 25 Kf6 Kg8 26 Rd3 Rh3 27 e6 fe 28 K×g6 Rg3+ 29 K×h5 Kg7=, or 27 Rd8+ Kh7 28 K×f7 R×f3+ 29 Ke7 g5 30 hg h4 31 e6 h3 32 Rd2 Kg6= is also playable.

24…hg 25 fg Kg7 26 Kg5 Rf1 27 Re4 Rf3 28 h5 (28 e6?? f6#) **28…gh 29 gh f6+ 30 Kg4**

Or 30 ef+ R×f6 31 Re7+ Rf7 32 h6+ Kg8=.

30…Rf1 31 h6+

A little trap before the curtain falls. 31…K×h6? loses to 32 e6 f5+ (if 32…Rg1+, then either 33 Kf4 Rg8 34 Kf5 or 33 Kf5 Rf1+ 34 Rf4 R×f4+ 35 K×f4 Kg6 36 Ke4) 33 Kh3! fe 34 e7.

31…Kg6! Draw.

As can be seen, Black did not have serious problems.

It should be mentioned that, when the white pawns had been set into motion, Keres used a typical strategic policy for this sort of position: ***attacking the pawns from the rear***.

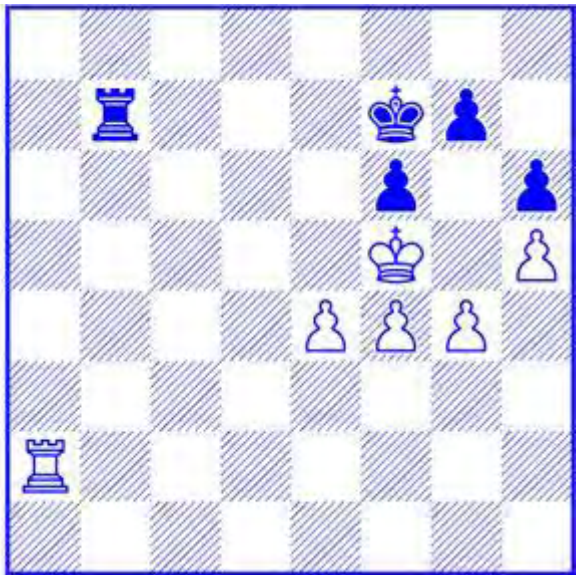
What if Black could not play …h7-h5 in time? We shall analyze two important endings that may serve as landmarks for both sides: the stronger side may pursue them while the weaker side should avoid these situations.

These endings are thoroughly analyzed in endgame handbooks. We skip some less important lines, limiting ourselves to the conclusions.

Botvinnik – Najdorf

Moscow ol 1956

9-116



1 Ra5 Rc7 2 Rd5 Ra7 3 e5 fe 4 fe (5 Rd7+! is threatened) **4…Ke7 5 e6 Ra4!**

5…Ra6 6 Rd7+ Kf8 7 Kg6! R×e6+ 8 Kh7 is quite bad for Black.

6 g5!

6 Rd7+ Kf8 7 Rf7+ Kg8 8 g5 fails in view of 8…Ra5+! (8…hg? 9 Kg6) 9 Ke4 Ra6=.

9-117

B?

6…Ra7!

The best defense, as suggested by Aronin. The rook may return because there is no danger of trading the rooks any longer: 7 Rd7+? R×d7 8 ed K×d7 9 Kg6 hg 10 K×g7 g4=.

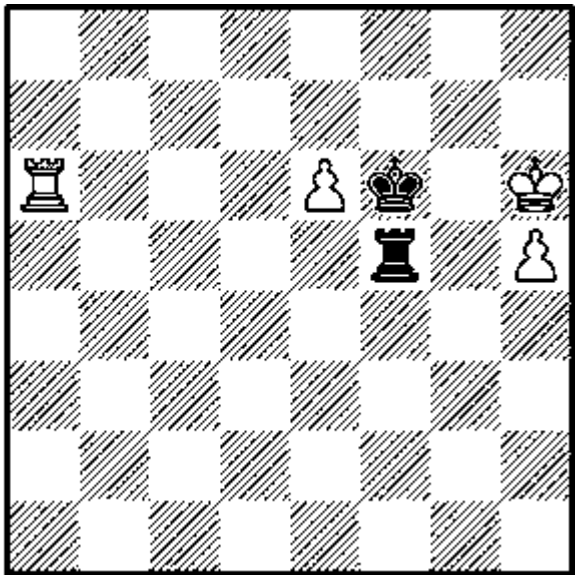
The actual continuation was 6…hg?! 7 Rd7+ Kf8 8 Rf7+ Kg8 9 Kg6 g4 10 h6! (the shortest way to a win) 10…gh 11 e7 Ra8 12 Rf6 (△ Rd6-d8) Black resigned.

7 Re5!

A key move! White protects the pawn and prepares a king invasion.

An anticipatory pawn exchange is wrong: 7 gh? gh 8 Rb5 (△ Rb6) 8…Rc7! 9 Rb6 Rc5+! 10 Kg6 Re5! 11 K×h6 Kf6! 12 Ra6! Rf5!.

9-118



W

In this position, Black must play very precisely in order to achieve a draw, but theory says that this goal is within his reach.

7…hg

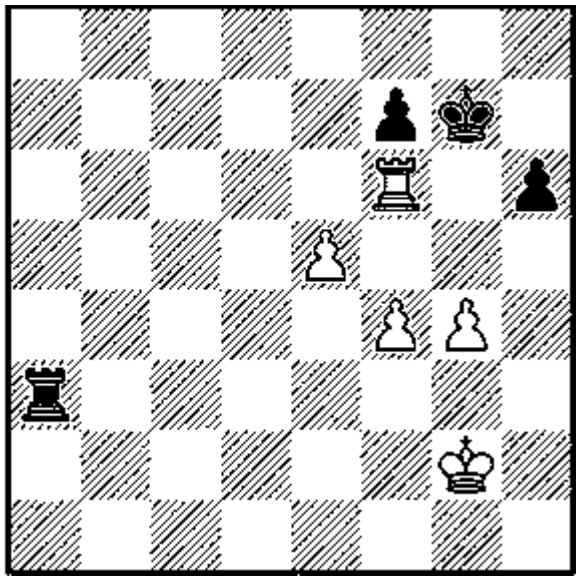
7…Kd6 8 gh gh 9 Kf6; 7…Ra6 8 Kg6 Kf8 9 Kh7 hg 10 e7+ Ke8 11 K×g7 g4 12 h6+–.

8 K×g5 (8 Kg6 Kd6 9 Re1 g4 10 h6! gh 11 Kf6 is also strong) **8…Ra1 9 Kg6 Rf1** (9…Rg1+ 10 Rg5) **10 K×g7 Rg1+ 11 Kh6! Rg2 12 Rg5**+–.

Capablanca – Yates

Hastings 1930/31

9-119



W

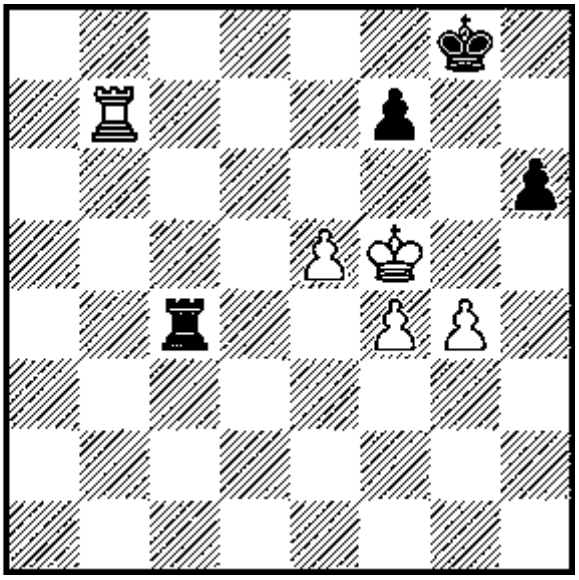
White's position is winning (the same evaluation is valid with the black pawn on h7 and the white pawn on g5). The winning plan is a rook transfer to the eighth rank followed by f4-f5-f6+. If the black rook aims at the e5-pawn, White defends it with the rook from e8.

Capablanca carried this plan through; however, as renowned rook endgame expert Kopaev demonstrated, both sides made errors along the way.

1 Rb6?!

White should have played 1 Rd6! in order to use the rook to protect against checks from the side. Now Black could reply 1…Ra4! 2 Kf3 (2 Kg3 Ra3+ 3 Kh4 Ra4 4 f5 Ra5 5 e6 fe 6 fe Kf6=) 2…Ra3+ 3 Ke4 Ra4+ 4 Kf5 Rc4 5 Rb7 (△ 6 e6) 5…Kg8! (if 5…Rc5, then 6 Rd7 and 7 Ke4).

9-120



W?

Kopaev had considered 5…Kf8, after which the Armenian Vardan Pogosyan suggested 6 e6! fe+ 7 Ke5, and came to the conclusion that Black must inevitably lose one of his pawns. The endgame that has arisen is lost for him.

With the king on g8, this idea is less effective in view of 7…Rc5+ 8 Kf6 (if the king were on f8, this move would win) 8…Rc4=, or 8 K×e6 Rc6+ and this version of the "two-pawns-versus-one-pawn" ending is drawn. Let me remind you that we have already dealt with a similar position in the game Smyslov-Keres (diagram 9-85).

6 g5 hg 7 K×g5 Rc5! is not dangerous (with the king on f8, the simplest would be Kopaev's recommendation 7…f6+!, which is not possible here because of 8 Kg6!+–).

Having occupied the f5-square with his king, White makes the implementation of the strongest plan – the preparation of f4-f5 – more difficult. Now he should have revisited this idea by playing 6 Rb3! Kg7 7 Re3 Rc6 (7…Ra4 8 Re4 Ra1 9 Rd4) 8 Ke4 Rc4+ 9 Kf3 Rc6.

To this point, we have been following Kopaev's line which demonstrates that 10 f5 Kf8 11 Ra3

Rc1 12 Ra8+ Ke7 13 f6+ Ke6 14 Re8+ Kd5 15 e6 Rc6 leads to a draw. But White's play can be strengthened. For example, after 10 Ra3 f6 11 Ra7+ Kf8, White does not play 12 Ke4 fe 13 fe Rc1 (Averbakh), but 12 ef! R×f6 13 Kg3 Kg8 14 Ra4 followed by Kh4-h5 (the only way to prevent the seizing of the key h5-square – the transfer of the rook to h1 – is too late here). A similar continuation was suggested by Jonathan Speelman, 10 Kg3 Ra6 11 Rb3: we are already familiar with the follow-up 11…f6 12 Rb7+ Kf8 13 ef, while on 11…Rc6 there follows 12 Rb8 Rc3+ 13 Kg2 Re3 14 Re8+– and f4-f5 is inevitable.

1…Re3?! 2 Rb4

2 Rb8 suggested itself. However, after 2…Re4 3 Kf3 Re1, the straightforward 4 Re8? Allows salvation by 4…h5! 5 g5 (5 gh Rf1+! 6 Ke4 Re1+ 7 Kf5 Rh1) 5…Rf1+ 6 Ke3 h4.

The most precise is 2 Rb1! (temporarily denying the black rook the first rank). Black is in zugzwang. He must either worsen his king's position or move his rook off the e-file where it is best placed. In both cases, the invasion of the white rook becomes more effective. For example, 2…Re4 (2…Re2+ 3 Kf3 Rh2 4 f5 h5 5 Rb7 hg+ 6 Kg3 Rh5 7 K×g4 Rh1 8 e6+–) 3 Kf3 Ra4, and now time has come for the main plan: 4 Rb8! Ra3+ 5 Kg2 Re3 6 Re8! Re2+ 7 Kf3 Re1 8 f5 Rf1+ 9 Ke2 Rf4 10 Ke3 R×g4 11 f6+ Kh7 12 e6+–.

2…Rc3 3 Kf2? (3 Rb8) **3…Ra3?**

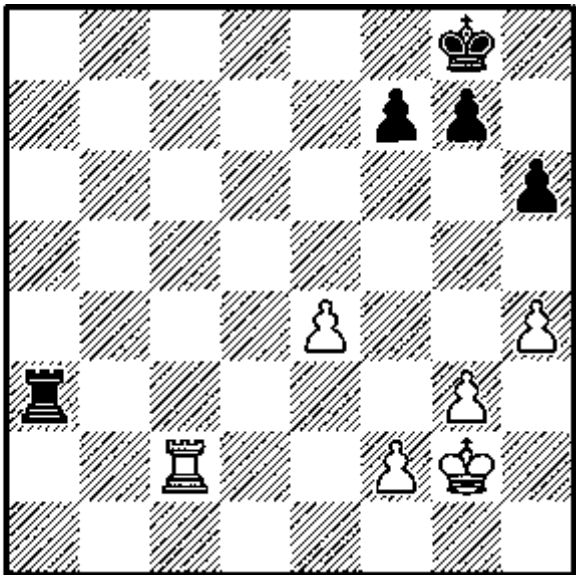
Both adversaries missed the fact that after 3…h5!, Black either trades a pair of pawns (4 gh Rh3) or, (in case of 4 g5 h4) obtains enough counterplay to save the game.

4 Rb7?! (4 Rb8!) **4…Kg8?!** (4…Ra2+!?) **5 Rb8+! Kg7 6 f5** (△ 7 f6+), and White won.

Korchnoi – Antoshin
USSR ch, Erevan 1954

9-121

W?



1 h5!

Black, if he was on move, could have considerably simplified his task by advancing his own pawn to h5. If 1 g4?!, then all the same 1…h5!.

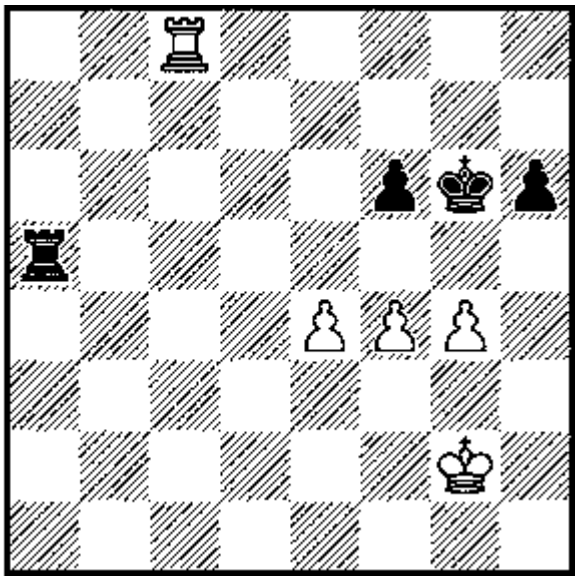
1…Ra5!

As Korchnoi noted in his exceptionally deep and far-reaching comments to this endgame, it is useful for Black to force the advance g3-g4.

2 g4

2 Rc8+ Kh7 3 g4 is not dangerous yet because of 3…g5! 4 hg+ K×g6 (△ 5…h5) 5 f4 f6!.

9-122



W

The last move is worth special attention. ***It is vitally important for Black to prevent the pressing advance e4-e5*** that leads to the setup from the Capablanca-Yates game. By the way, in that game the white pawn stood on e4 a few moves before the position of the diagram 9-119 arose, and Yates could have had an easy draw by means of …f7-f6.

2…Ra7?

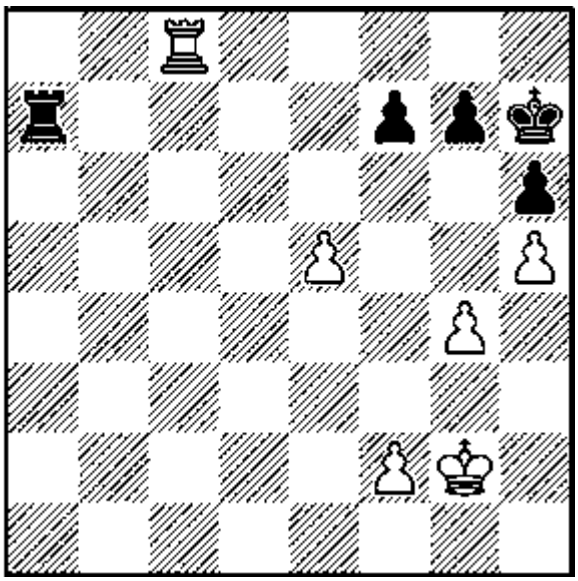
Antoshin had to keep in mind the danger of a check along the eighth rank: his king, when standing on h7, is too far removed from a passed e-pawn if White manages to create it. Therefore here, as well as later on, he should have played f7-f6!. Black could then parry the threat of transposition into the winning position from the Botvinnik-Najdorf game by means of catching the white pawns from behind. A characteristic variation was demonstrated by Korchnoi: 2…f6! 3 Rc8+ Kf7 4 Rc7+ Kg8! 5 Kf3 (5 f4 Ra3 – White's king is cut off from its pawns) 5…Ra3+ 6 Kf4 Ra2 7 Kf5 Kh7! (this is why the black king pulled back to g8) 8 f4 Rf2!=, as White fails to create the passed e-pawn.

It is time to explain why the move 1…Ra5 was given an exclamation mark. With a pawn on g3, this defensive plan does not work: the f4-pawn is protected, so White can play Ke6, while Black can hardly prevent the penetration of the white king to f5 (via g4) at an earlier stage.

3 Rc6?

After 3 Rc8+! Kh7 4 e5! (△ Kg3, f4, Re8+–), Black would have been faced with problems one can hardly tackle over the board.

9-123



B

As Korchnoi showed, almost all defensive methods are doomed to lose: White either creates a dangerous passed e-pawn or transposes to positions from the game Capablanca-Yates. For example, 4…g5? 5 hg+ K×g6 6 f4+–, or 4…Ra4?! 5 Kg3 Re4 6 Re8 g5 (6…Ra4 7 Rf8 Ra7 8

f4+–; 6…f6 7 e6 g5 8 hg+ K×g6 9 f3 Re1 10 Kf2 Re5 11 f4+–) 7 hg+ K×g6 8 f3!+– (8 f4? is not precise; Black holds after 8…h5!). Of course, only basic results are shown here, as a detailed explanation would have been rather complicated and too vast.

4…Re7! (the only defense) 5 f4 f6! 6 Rc5 fe 7 fe, and now Black must prevent the white king's march to the center, that would transpose to the Botvinnik-Najdorf ending, by 7…Rf7!. Here Korchnoi gives 8 Kg3 g6!= and 8 e6 Re7 9 Rc6 g6 10 Rd6 (△ 11 Rd7) 10…Re8 11 Kf3 gh 12 gh Kg7 13 Ke4 Kf6 14 Kd5 Re7=.

The prophylactic move 8 Rd5! is more dangerous for Black. He cannot play 8…g6? on account of 9 e6 Rf8 (9…Re7 10 Rd7) 10 Rd7+ Kg8 11 e7 Re8 12 Rd8 Kf7 13 R×e8 K×e8 14 g5!+–, and 8…g5? 9 e6 Rf8 10 e7 Re8 11 Re5 Kg7 12 Re6+– are also bad. Black also loses in the line 8…Rf8 9 Kg3 Rf1 10 Rd7!⊙ (10 Rd3 g5!) 10…Rf8 (on 10…Kg8 the same reply follows) 11 Rd3 g5 12 Rf3 Re8 13 Rf5 followed by 14 Kf3. Nevertheless, as Pogosyan has shown, he manages to save himself by continuing either 9…g5! (instead of 9…Rf1?) 10 Rd3 Kg7 11 Rf3 Re8 12 Rf5 Ra8, or 8…Rf4!? 9 Kg3 Ra4 10 Kf3 Kg8.

3…Ra3? (3…f6!=) **4 f3?**

4 Rc8+! Kh7 5 e5! was winning.

4…Ra5!? (4…f6!)

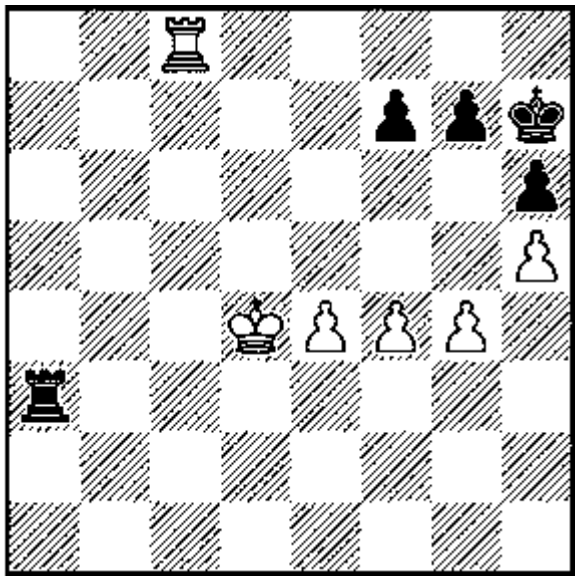
Now White can gradually strengthen his position by means of Rc8-d8, Kg3-f4 or f3-f4, but, as his pawn cannot get to e5, the game will be drawn if Black defends precisely.

Korchnoi decided to force matters and was successful, but only as a result of a new mistake by Black.

5 Rc8+ Kh7 6 f4?! (△ 7 e5+–) **6…Ra2+ 7 Kf3 Ra3+ 8 Kf2 Ra2+ 9 Ke3 Ra3+ 10 Kd4**

9-124

B?



Black can hold the game rather simply: 10…Rf3! 11 Ke5 (11 f5 f6=) 11…f6+ 12 Kf5 Rf1, achieving the position from the note to Black's move 2.

10…Rg3?

He chases after material gain but lets White create a passed pawn that will cost him a rook.

11 Rf8! f6 12 e5! R×g4

12…fe+ 13 fe R×g4+ 14 Kd5 Rg1 15 e6 Rd1+ 16 Kc6 Re1 17 Kd7 Rd1+ 18 Ke8+– is no better.

13 e6 R×f4+ 14 Kd5 Rf5+ 15 Kd6 R×h5 16 e7 Re5 17 e8Q R×e8 18 R×e8

The fight is almost over. When the white king comes back to his home side of the board, the rook will be stronger than three pawns.

18…Kg6 19 Kd5 Kf5!? 20 Re1

20 Kd4 Kf4 21 Kd3 Kf3 22 Rg8 g5 23 Rf8+– is also strong.

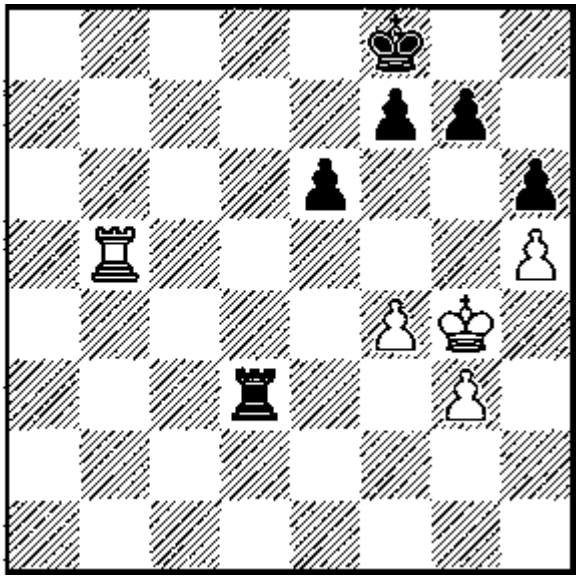
20…h5 21 Rf1+ Kg4 22 Ke4 g5 23 R×f6 h4 24 Ke3 Kg3 25 Ke2 g4 26 Kf1 Kh2 27 Rf4 h3 28 R×g4 Kh1 29 Kf2 h2 30 Kg3 Kg1 31 Kh3+ Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

The two last endings fully fit this category, but I would like to add some new examples, the last of which has some theoretical value.

Bellón – Chekhov
Barcelona 1984

9-125



W

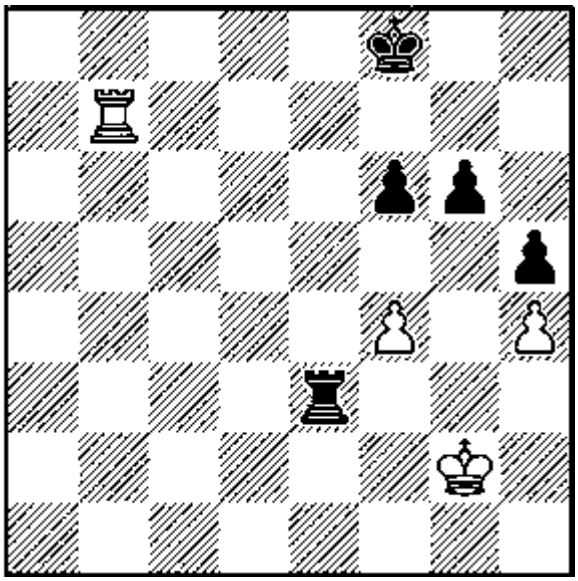
The waiting policy (1 Ra5 or 1 Rb7) gave a rather easy draw, but Bellón decided to chase after the g7-pawn.

1 Rb8+ Ke7 2 Rg8?? Rd8!

White resigned. The pawn endgame is quite hopeless for him, while after 3 R×g7, his rook is lost: 3…Kf8 4 Rh7 Kg8 5 R×h6 Kg7 6 Kg5 Rd5+.

Norri – Svidler
Erevan ol 1996

9-126



W

Here again White did not have enough patience and made an analogous error.

1 f5? (1 Ra7=) **1…gf 2 Rh7 Kg8 3 R×h5??**

3 Ra7 could still hold the game.

3…Re5 4 Kf3 f4! White resigned.

Piket – Kasparov
Internet Tournament 2000

9-127
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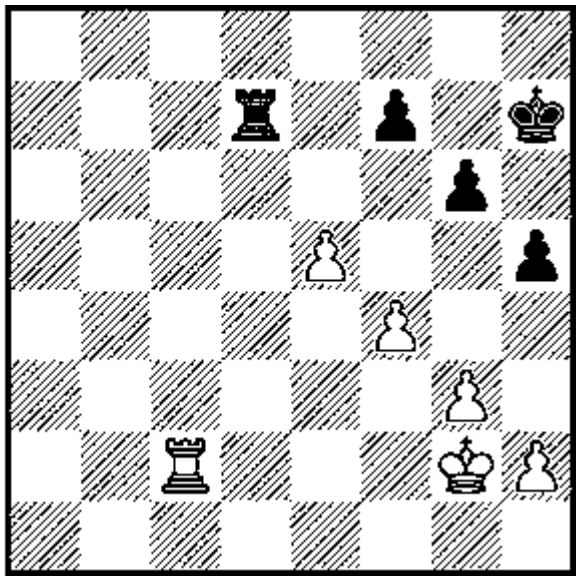

B

White has succeeded in bringing his pawn to e5 (generally speaking, it would have been favorable for Black if he prevented this by playing …f7-f6 at an earlier stage). On the other hand, …h6-h5 has already been played, so reaching a draw should not be a very difficult problem.

Kasparov had to decide how to react should the white king march to g5 via h3 and h4. The simplest method was to play …Kh6 at the proper moment. For example, 1…Kg7 2 Kh3 Ra7 3 Kh4 Kh6!, and one cannot see how White could make any progress.

Moreover, a king invasion to g5 is not too dangerous. Even with the white rook on the seventh rank Black can survive. Averbakh analyzes 3…Ra6 (instead of 3…Kh6) 4 Rc7 Rb6 5 Re7 Ra6 6 Kg5 (6 e6 Kf6! 7 R×f7+ K×e6=) 6…Ra5! (as Bologan says, even 6…Rb6!? 7 e6 Rb5+! or 7 f5 gf does not lose) 7 f5 gf 8 e6 (8 K×h5 Kf8 △ 9…R×e5) 8…f4+! 9 K×f4 Kf6 10 R×f7+ K×e6=.

1…Rd3?!

In many similar situations, to place the rook behind the e-pawn makes some sense. In particular, such a maneuver is not bad when h-pawns are absent. But here this transfer is wrong. Its slightly modified version does not work either: 1…Rd4?! 2 Kh3 Re4? (in case of 2…g5?, White does not play 3 fg Kg6, he has 3 Rc7! instead) 3 Rc7! (3 Kh4 Kh6 △ 4…g5+) 3…Kg7 4 Kh4 Re2 5 Kg5!, and we come to situations that have actually occurred in the game.

2 Kh3 Re3?

2…Rd7 3 Kh4 Kh6= was necessary.

3 Kh4?!

Playing 3 Rc7! Kg7 4 Kh4, Piket could have chained the hostile rook to the e-file and, as we shall see, this was a winning method.

3…Kg7?

He should have tried 3…Kh6! 4 Rc7 Re2!. If 5 Kh3, then 5…Kg7 (5…g5!? is also playable) 6 Rb7 g5! 7 fg Kg6. The line 5 g4 hg 6 R×f7 R×h2+ 7 K×g4 is more dangerous for Black, but after 7…Re2, he seems to be surviving.

4 Kg5?

An erroneous order of moves; again 4 Rc7! Re2 5 Kg5 is correct. Now Black could return to Averbakh's plan: 4…Ra3! 5 Rc7 Ra5=. However Piket could hardly expect that his opponent would suddenly change his mind and move the rook back.

4…Re1? 5 Rc7 Re2 6 Re7! Ra2 7 f5! gf 8 e6 h4 9 R×f7+ Kg8 10 Kf6 Black resigned.

Let us look at 6…Re4 (instead of 6…Ra2).

9-128
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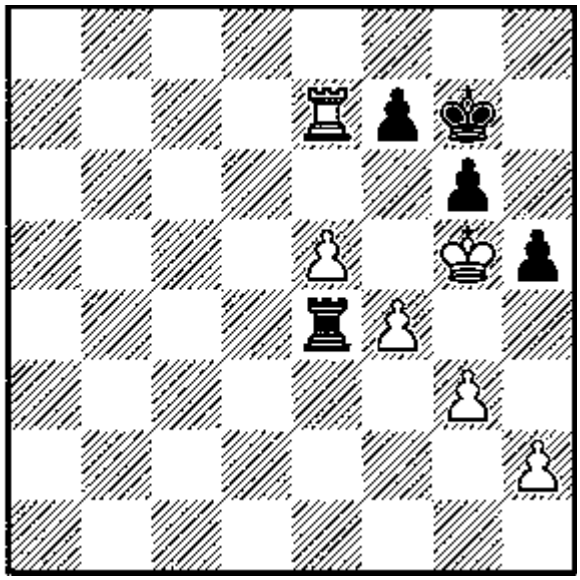


W?

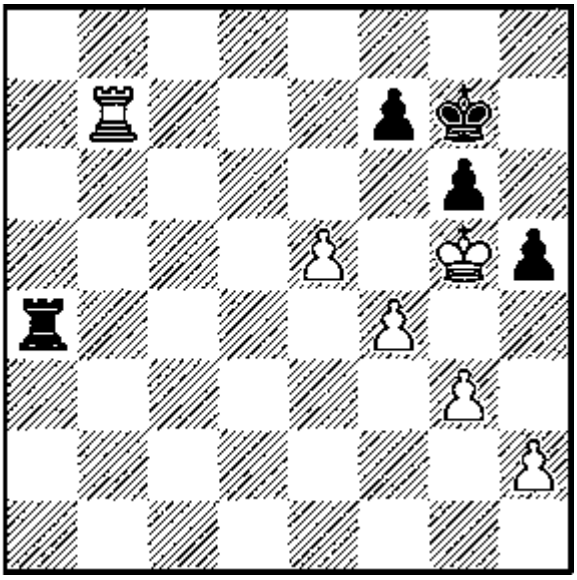
This position has occurred in the following games: Stean-Hartston (Great Britain ch, Brighton 1972), Ionov-Karasev (Leningrad 1983) and Matveeva-Rappoport (Baku 1983). In all these games, White found a forced win.

7 e6! R×e6 8 R×e6 fe 9 h3 Kf7 10 Kh6 Kf6 11 g4 h4 (11…hg 12 hg⊙+–) **12 g5+** (12 Kh7? g5) **12…Kf5 13 Kg7 K×f4 14 K×g6 e5 15 Kf6! e4 16 g6 e3 17 g7 e2 18 g8Q e1Q 19 Qg4+ Ke3 20 Qe6+ Kf2 21 Q×e1+ K×e1 22 Kg5**+–

Finally, instead of 5…Re2, Black could have played 5…Re4!? at once. The point is to meet 6 Re7 with 6…Ra4!, and 7 f5, as was played by Piket, is not possible anymore, while if 7 e6, then 7…Ra5+ 8 Kh4 Kf6 9 R×f7+ K×e6=.

White must wait: 6 Rb7!⊙ Ra4 (6…Re2 7 Re7! transposes to the actual course of the game).

9-129



W?

And here Bologan has discovered a brilliant solution: a double pawn sacrifice 7 g4!! hg (7…Re4 8 gh gh 9 h4 is hopeless) 8 f5! gf 9 e6+–.

Winning another pawn is much weaker: 7 e6 Ra5+ 8 Kh4 Kf6 9 ef Kg7 10 Re7 Kf8! 11 Re5 Ra2, or 10 h3 Kf8 11 g4 hg 12 hg Rc5 13 f5 Rc6! (rather than 13…gf? 14 g5+–). It looks like Black holds in both these lines.

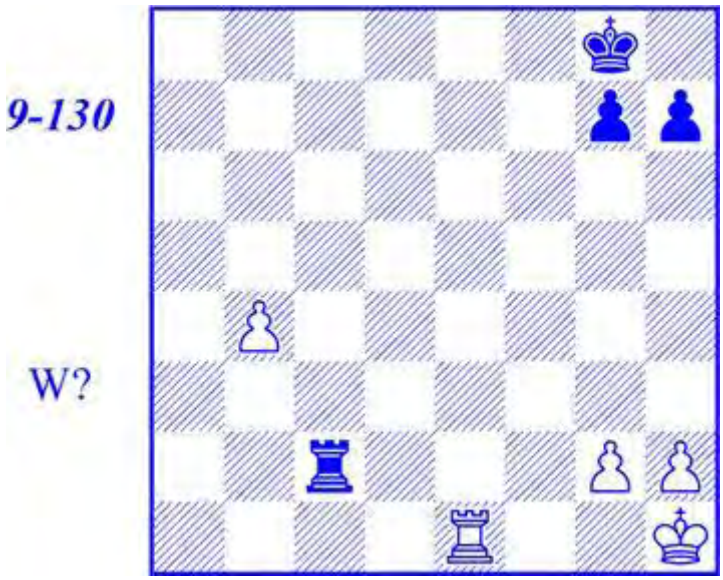
Balance on One Wing and an Extra Pawn on Another

Situations with an extra distant passed pawn occur now and then, therefore it is very important to learn their correct evaluation and handling. ***The decisive factor in this sort of endgame is the position of the rook of the stronger side. In the majority of cases, the rook is placed best "à la Tarrasch," behind its own passed pawn; sometimes its sideways position is preferable.***

Quite often, however, we lack free choice, so the rook mostly stands in front of the pawn in practical games. Therefore we shall pay more attention to these cases.

The Rook Behind Its Own Pawn

Botvinnik – Boleslavsky
Leningrad/Moscow 1941



1 Rb1!

The rook has occupied its correct position, behind the pawn. After 1 h3? Rb2! 2 Re4, Black could have achieved a draw.

1…Kf7?

The passed pawn should be blocked as soon as possible. Black had to play 1…Rc6! 2 b5 Rb6. I do not think this was enough for a draw but, anyway, his opponent would have then been faced with more complicated problems. After a king's march to the queenside, Black removes his rook from b6 either for protecting his own pawns or for attacking the hostile ones.

2 b5 Ke6 3 b6 Rc8 4 h3

4 b7? Rb8 is wrong because it allows Black to eliminate the b-pawn and thereafter to bring his king back to the kingside in time. For example, 5 Kg1 Kd6 6 Kf2 Kc6 7 Ke3 R×b7 8 R×b7 K×b7 9 Ke4 Kc6 10 Ke5 Kd7=.

4…Rb8 5 Kh2 Kd5

If the black king remains with his pawns, his adversary heads to the b-pawn. Black cannot prevent this by means of the opposition because White can make a waiting rook move. Black will then be obliged to give way to the white king because his rook has no waiting moves. This clearly demonstrates the difference between the rook positions.

6 Kg3 Kc6 7 Kg4 Kb7

A capture on b6 is impossible now. Therefore, ***Black blocks the pawn with his king, releasing the rook from this duty.*** A standard and often quite useful method, but alas, it does not bring any relief to Black in this particular case.

9-131

W?

8 Re1!

Excellently played! While the rook was pinning the black rook down it was superbly placed on b1, but now it will be more active when placed sideways. In case of 8…K×b6 9 Rb1+, Black loses the pawn endgame.

8…Rg8 9 Re6 Ka6 10 Kg5 Kb7 11 h4

The rest is simple. White attacks on the kingside, having an extra piece there.

11…Ka6 12 h5 Kb7 13 g4 Ka6 14 Kh4 Kb7 15 h6 gh 16 R×h6 Rg7 17 Kh5 ($ g5, Re6, Kh6+–) **17…Ka6 18 Rc6 Re7 19 Rc7 Re5+ 20 g5 K×b6 21 R×h7 Kc6 22 Kh6 Kd6 23 g6 Re1 24 Rf7 Ke6 25 Rf2 Ra1 26 g7 Rh1+ 27 Kg6 Rg1+ 28 Kh7 Rh1+ 29 Kg8 Ke7 30 Re2+ Kd7 31 Re4** ("bridging") **31…Rh2 32 Kf7** Black resigned.

Botvinnik – Borisenko

USSR ch, Moscow 1955

9-132

W

1 Ra4!

Botvinnik blocks the pawn immediately. If he had allowed …a5-a4, he would have had no chances at all. Alekhine won a similar ending from Capablanca in the last, 34th, game of their match for the world championship in 1927: it can be found in almost every book on endgames.

1…Kg5

The king heads for the queenside, but a safer road was via g7. The text move was regarded as an error by all the commentators. Why? The point is that ***the best chance for a successful defense in this sort of position is counterplay on the kingside by creating a passed pawn or weakening the opponent's position.*** And the position of the king in front of the pawns makes it easier to create

counterplay.

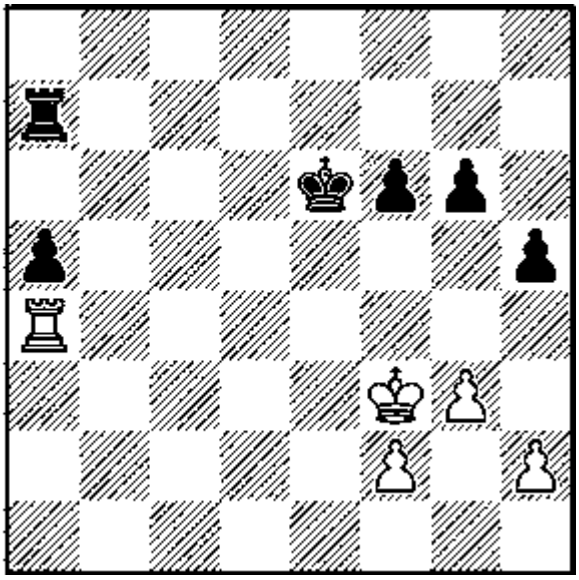
Let's see how the fight takes shape after 1…Kg7!?:

(a) 2 f3 Kf7 3 g4 h4–+;

(b) 2 Kf1 Kf7 3 Ke2 Ke6 4 Kd3 Kd5 5 Kc3 Kc5 6 Kb3 Kb5 7 Re4 a4+ 8 Ka3 Ra6 9 h4 Kc5 10 Re2 Kd4 11 Re3 g5–+ (Marin);

(c) 2 h4 Kf7 3 Kf1 Ke6 4 Ke2 Kd6 5 Kd3 (5 g4 hg 6 R×g4 a4 7 R×g6 a3 8 Rg1 a2 9 Ra1 Ke5 10 Kf3 Ra4–+) 5…f5! (wrong is 5…Kc6? 6 g4 Rd7+ 7 Kc3 Rd5 8 Rf4 f5 9 gh gh 10 Kc4=) 6 f3 Kc5 7g4 Kb5 8 Rd4 a4 9 Kc2 a3 10 Kb1 Ra4! 11 Rd6 hg 12 R×g6 gfo (Kopaev);

(d) 2 Kg2 Kf7 3 Kf3 Ke6



4 h4 (4 g4 h4 5 g5 fg 6 Kg4 Kf6 7 h3 Ra8–+) 4…f5 5 Kf4 Kd5 6 Kg5 Ra6 7 f3 Kc5 8 g4 fg 9 fg hg 10 K×g4 Kb5 11 Ra1 a4–+ (Levenfish, Smyslov).

The conclusion that 1…Kg7 won was refuted by Vardan Pogosyan. He found an improvement in Levenfish and Smyslov's line. After 4 g4! h4, White, instead of the pawn sacrifice 5 g5?, simply plays 5 Kf4!. Now 5…g5+ 6 Ke4 (intending 7 f4) is not dangerous, while 6…Rb7 7 R:a5 Rb4+ 8 Kf3 Rf4+ 9 Kg2 R×g4+ 10 Kf3 leads to a drawn ending, with two pawns versus three on one flank. And if 5…Kd5 6 g5 f5 7 Ke3, the h4-pawn, stripped of its support, becomes an object of attack: 7…Kc5 8 Kd2 h3 9 Ra3 a4 10 Kc1 Kb4 11 R×h3 a3 12 Kb1=.

As we see, ***counterplay on the kingside is sometimes connected with Black's plan in the previous example, of blockading the passed pawn with the king.***

2 f3! Kf5

Also possible was 2…f5!?, but then after 3 Kf2 Kf6 4 h4 Ke5 5 Ke3 Kd5 6 g4! fg 7 fg Kc5 8 Kd3 Kb5 9 Re4 Rc7 10 gh gh 11 Re8! (Levenfish, Smyslov), White would manage to stave off defeat.

3 g4+! hg?

The exchange of pawns makes White's task easier. By playing 3…Ke6!, Black could have placed much more complicated problems before his opponent. And yet, as subsequent analysis demonstrated, the position remained objectively drawn.

4 fg+ Ke5

The other attempt is 4…Kg5!? 5 Kg2 Kh4.

9-134

W?

Kopaev, as well as Levenfish and Smyslov, examined 6 Kg1 Kh3 7 Kh1 Re7 (7… f5 8 gf gf 9 Kg1 f4 10 Kf2=) 8 Ra3+ K×g4 9 R×a5, evaluating this position as drawn. But this is not so: after 9…Kf3!, White is in trouble. Instead of 6 Kg1?, Botvinnik recommended 6 h3, and Marin continued this line: 6…g5 7 Kh2 Rb7 8 R×a5 Rb2+ 9 Kg1 K×h3 10 Ra6 K×g4 11 R×f6 Kg3 12 Rf1!=.

5 h4 Kd5 6 h5 gh 7 gh

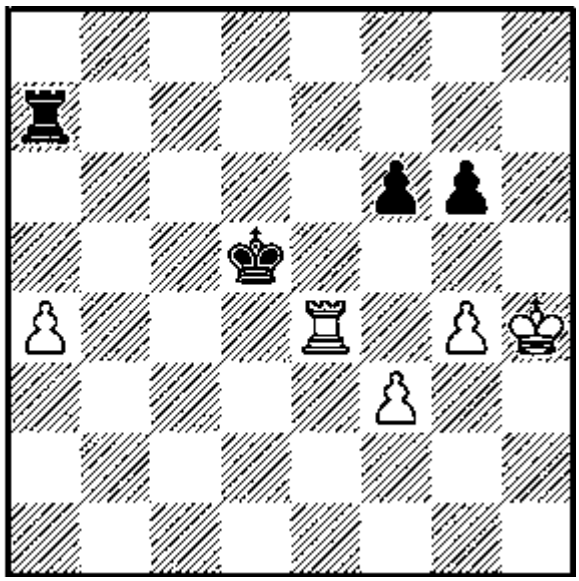
The goal is reached; White has created a passed pawn. Black cannot win any longer, for example, 7…Kc5 8 h6 Kb5 9 Rh4 Rh7 10 Rh5+ Kb4 11 Rh4+ Kb3 12 Rh3+ Kb2 13 Rh4=.

7…Ke6 8 h6 Kf7 9 Rg4! Kf8 10 Rf4 Ra6 11 Rg4 Ra7 12 Rf4 Kg8 13 R×f6 a4 14 Rf2 Kh7 15 Ra2 K×h6 16 Kf2 Kg5 17 Ke3 Draw.

Tragicomedies

Dvoretsky – Kupreichik
USSR ch(1), Minsk 1976

9-135



B?

The diagrammed position arose in an adjourned game a few moves after resumption of play, so both the adversaries had reached it in their home analyses.

I only expected a logical maneuver that placed the rook behind the passed pawn: 1…Rh7+! 2 Kg3 Rh1. In that case, after 3 Kf4 Ra1? 4 g5! fg+ 5 K×g5 Ra3 6 Rf4 Black would be lost, but 3…Rf1!, preparing …g6-g5+, destroyed White's plan.

1…Rb7?!

A peculiar move: my rook now has two ways to get behind the pawn: 2 Re3 $ 3 Ra3 and 2 a5 $

3 Ra4.

The second way is apparently more attractive: in principle, it is favorable to push the pawn farther. So I stepped into it, failing to discover a cleverly prepared trap. The correct continuation was 2 Re3! Ra7 3 Ra3 Ra5! 4 Kg3 and Black's position is still very difficult, very probably lost.

2 a5? Rb3! 3 Ra4 R×f3 4 a6

It seems so that the pawn can only be stopped by means of 4…g5+ 5 Kh5 Rh3+ 6 Kg6 Rh8 7 a7 Ra8, and this is surely hopeless for Black.

4…Ke6!!

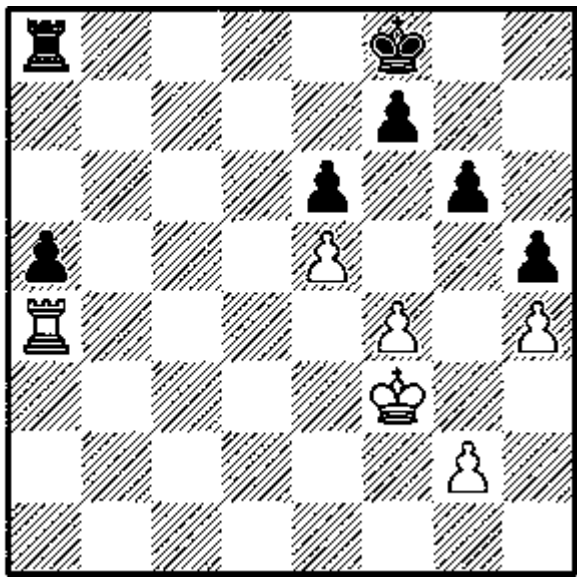
It comes to light that after 5 a7? g5+ 6 Kh5 Kf7, White will be mated.

5 g5 fg+ 6 K×g5 Rf8 Draw.

Em. Lasker – Levenfish

Moscow 1925

9-136



W

1 g4

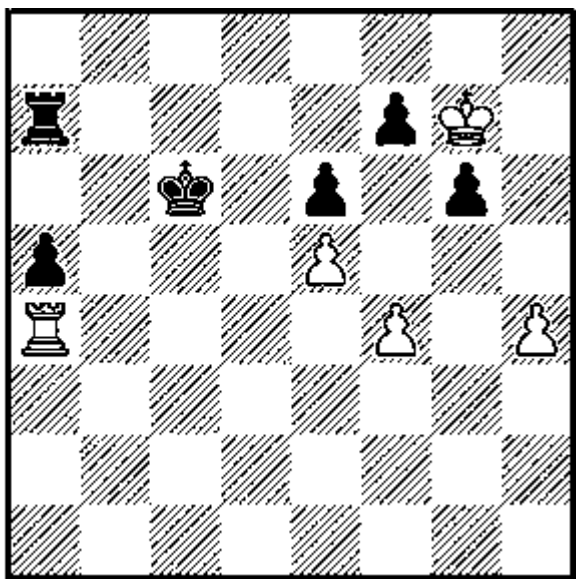
Lasker aspires for counterplay on the kingside. An alternative method was 1 Ke4 Ke7 2 Kd4, trying to prevent the black king from joining his pawn. However 2…Rd8+! was strong then.

1…hg+?

Levenfish lets the white king go ahead for no reason whatsoever. An easy win was 1…Ke7 2 gh gh, for example, 3 Ke4 Kd7 4 f5 Kc6 5 f6 Kb5 6 Ra1 a4 7 Kf4 Rg8–+, or 3 f5 ef 4 Kf4 Ke6 5 Kg5 K×e5 6 K×h5 Kf6! with inevitable mate.

2 K×g4 Ke7 3 Kg5 Ra7⊙ 4 Kh6 Kd7 5 Kg7 Kc6

9-137



W?

6 Kf6?

A decisive loss of a tempo! Lasker saw the correct way but, as he explained after the game, he wanted instinctively to avoid a discovered check along the seventh rank.

He should have performed the breakthrough that gave him a passed pawn immediately: 6 f5! ef (6…gf 7 h5) 7 e6 fe+ 8 K×g6. After 8…Kb5 9 Ra1 f4 10 h5, both 10…f3 11 Rf1 a4 12 R×f3 a3 13 Rf1 a2 14 Ra1 Kc4 15 h6 Kb3 16 h7 Ra8 17 Re1! e5 (17…Kb2 18 Re2+) 18 Kg7 e4 19 h8Q R×h8 20 K×h8 (the black pawn cannot reach e2, so there is no win), and 10…e5 11 Re1! Kc4 (11…a4 12 R×e5+ Kc6 13 Re4 a3 14 R×f4 a2 15 Rf1=) 12 R×e5 Kd3 13 h6 f3 14 h7 R×h7 (14…Ra8 15 R×a5) 15 K×h7 f2 16 Rf5 Ke3 17 Rf8 (or 17 Re5+ Kf4 18 Re8) 17…a4 18 Re8+ Kf3 19 Rf8+ Kg2 20 Rg8+ Kh3 21 Rf8= lead to a draw.

6…Kb5 7 Ra1 a4 8 f5 ef 9 e6 fe 10 K×g6 f4! 11 h5 f3! 12 h6 (12 Rf1 a3–+) **12…e5! 13 Re1**

Neither 13 h7 R×h7 (13…Ra8) 14 K×h7 e4 15 Rf1 a3 16 Kg6 a2 17 Kf5 e3 18 Ke4 e2–+ nor 13 Kf5 Rh7 14 Rh1 f2 15 K×e5 R×h6–+ can help White.

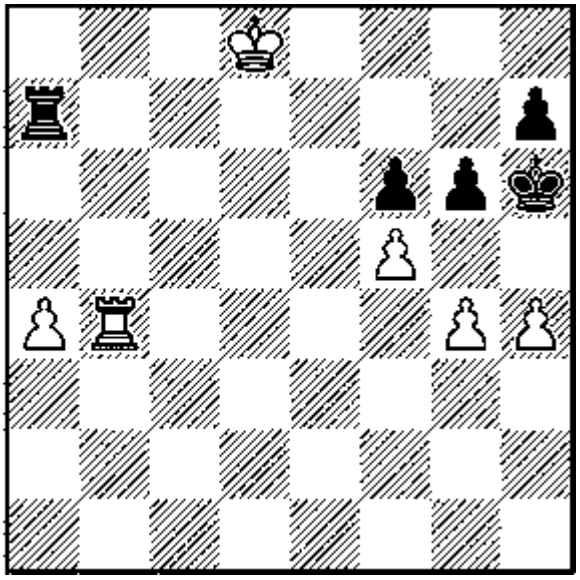
13…a3 14 R×e5+ Kc4 15 Re1 a2 16 h7 Ra8!

The pawns are separated by four files. Therefore 16…R×h7? 17 K×h7 f2 18 Rf1 Kd3 19 Ra1! Kc3 20 Rf1! would have enabled White to reach a draw.

17 Kg7 f2 18 Rf1 (18 Ra1 Kb3) **18…a1Q+ 19 R×a1 R×a1 20 h8Q Rg1+** White resigned.

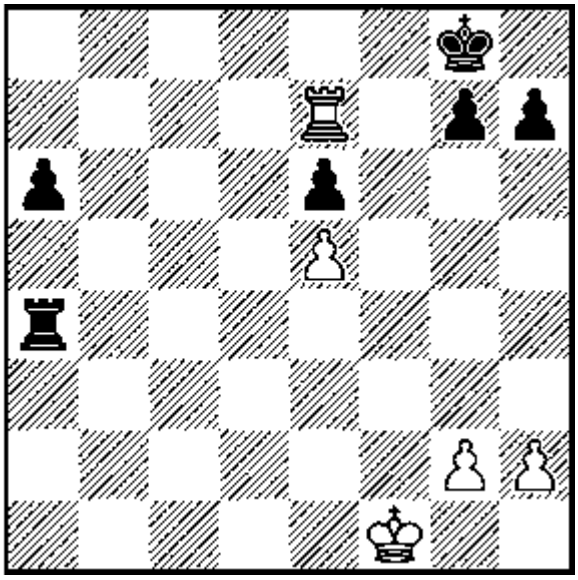
Exercises

9-138



9/19
B?

9-139



9/20
B?

What is the outcome with correct play?

We have seen a section with an identical title in the theory of "a rook and a rook pawn versus a rook" endgames. The ideas from that section will be useful for our current considerations.

A pawn advance to the seventh rank absolutely shackles the opponent's forces. However, if there are no vulnerable points in his camp, the game is still drawn because a king march to the pawn is useless: no refuge from rook checks from behind is provided.

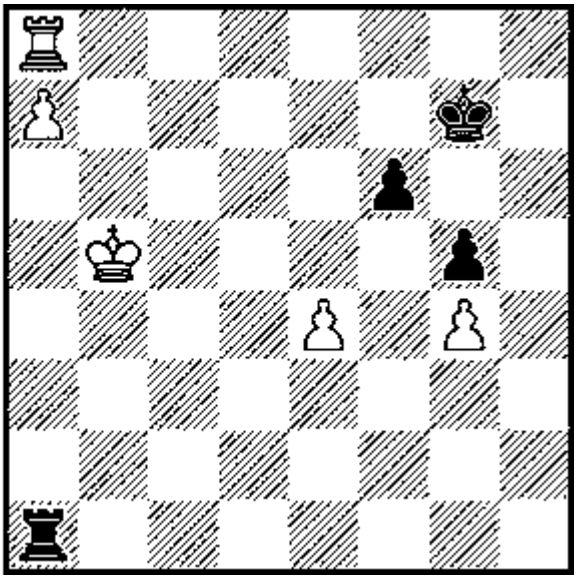
Pushing the pawn to the seventh rank makes sense, and offers winning chances when one of the following three plans is possible:

Plan 1

It is sometimes possible to sacrifice the passed pawn, in order to exchange rooks by means of a seventh-rank check, transposing into a won pawn endgame.

Benko – Gereben
Budapest 1951

9-140



W

If the pawn stood on a6, then after 1 Kb6, the king could escape the checks at a7. But here, the king has no shelter, so White's only hope lies in the exchange of rooks.

1 Kb6 Rb1+ 2 Kc6 Rc1+ 3 Kd6 Ra1?

The key question in a pawn endgame will be: Who controls the opposition? After this mistake, it turns out to be White. Black had to continue 3…Rd1+! 4 Ke6 Ra1 5 Rd8 (5 Re8 Ra6+! 6 Kf5 R×a7=) 5…R×a7 6 Rd7+ R×d7 7 K×d7 Kh7!=. Note that Black must have the distant opposition, not the close one: 7…Kf7? 8 Kd6+–. We examined very nearly the same situation in the pawn endings chapter (Neishtadt's study, diagram 1-8).

4 Rc8! (of course not 4 Re8? Ra6+!) **4…Ra6+ 5 Rc6 R×a7 6 Rc7+ R×c7 7 K×c7**

Now White has the distant opposition! There followed: **7…Kh7 8 Kd7! Kg6 9 Ke6 Kg7 10 Ke7 Kg6 11 Kf8** Black resigned.

Plan 2

Sometimes the passed pawn can be exchanged for some of the enemy pawns, leading to a winning endgame with the pawns all on the same side.

The following endgame is very important: we shall find ourselves referring to it again and again.

Unzicker – Lundin
Amsterdam ol 1954

9-141

W?

1 f3+! (1 a7 Ra2+ $ 2…Kf3) **1…Kf5 2 a7! Ra2+**

2…Ra6 changes nothing: 3 Kd3 Rd6+ 4 Kc4 Rd7 5 Kc5 Re7 6 Kd6! Re6+ (6…Rb7 7 Rb8! R×a7 8 Rb5#) 7 Kd7 Ra6 8 Ke7.

3 Kd3 Ra1 4 Kd4

Observe the following tactical trick: 4 g4+ hg 5 fg+ K×g4 6 h5!. However, in this particular position it fails because 4 g4+? can be met with 4…Kf4!.

9-142

B

When Black's pawn stands on f7, his king can return to f6 or g7 with an absolutely drawn position. Here, however, White has a clear plan: the transfer of the king to h6 followed by an exchange of the a7-pawn for Black's kingside pawns. Black has nothing to oppose this plan.

In case of 6…R×f3 7 Rf8 Ra3 8 a8Q R×a8 9 R×a8 Kg4, the simplest solution is 10 Ra3 g5 11 hg fg 12 Kd4 h4 13 gh gh 14 Ke3 Kg3 15 Ra8.

6…Ra1 7 Kd6 Ra3?! (7…Ra6+) **8 Ke7?!**

White follows his plan, missing an immediate winning opportunity: 8 Rc8! $ 9 Rc5#.

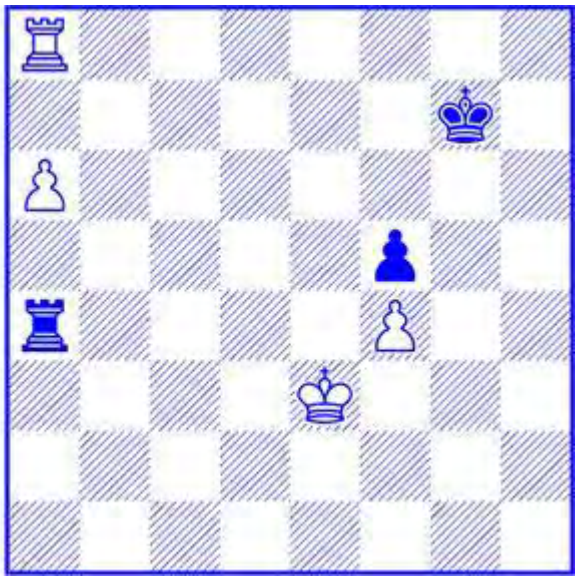
8…Ra6

8…Ra2 is slightly more clever; the point is 9 Kf7?! Ra6! 10 Kg7 g5 11 hg K×g5 12 Kf7 Kf5 13 g4+? hg 14 fg+ Kf4, with an important difference: the f6-pawn is protected by the rook. The squares a6 and f7 are corresponding; the simplest way for White to circumvent the mined square is by playing 9 Kf8! Ra6 10 Kf7!⊙ Ra3 11 Kg7, and 11…g5 is absolutely hopeless here.

9 Kf7 Ra3 10 Kg7 Ra1 11 Kh6! Ra6 12 Rb8 R×a7 13 Rb5+ Ke6 14 K×g6 Ra8 15 K×h5 Rg8 16 g4 Rh8+ 17 Kg6 Black resigned.

Plan 3

The most important method of playing for the win with the pawn on the seventh rank is to try to win the rook for the passed pawn. For this to work, the enemy king must be decoyed into the path of a rook check (as, for instance, we tried to do in the Unzicker-Lundin endgame, in the 4.g4+? variation). ***Most often, the stronger side will try to create a kingside passed pawn, which will knock the king out of his safe g7-square. An important point to remember is that this end can be achieved by advancing a bishop's pawn, but a knight's or rook's pawn is generally useless.***



1 a7!

This renders the f4-pawn untouchable; now the king goes after the black pawn, which must fall, because of zugzwang.

1…Kh7 2 Kd3 Kg7 3 Kc3 Kh7 4 Kb3 Ra1 5 Kb4 Kg7 6 Kc5 Ra6 7 Kd5 Ra1 8 Ke5! Ra5+ 9 Ke6⊙ Kh7 10 Kf6⊙+–

It should be noted that the inexact 8 Ke6?! Ra5 leaves White, not Black, in zugzwang (9 Rd8?? R×a7 10 Rd7+ leads to a drawn pawn endgame). But he can easily give his opponent the move by playing 9 Kd6 Kh7, and now either 10 Ke7 Kg7 (10…Ra6 11 Kf7⊙) 11 Ke6, or 10 Kc6 (threatening 11 Kb6) 10…Ra1 11 Kd5 Ra5+ 12 Kd6! Kg7 13 Ke6⊙+–.

Rovner – Shchipunov
Kiev 1938 (sides reversed)

1 b7?

As we have just seen, Black inevitably loses his f-pawn. But, in contrast to the previous

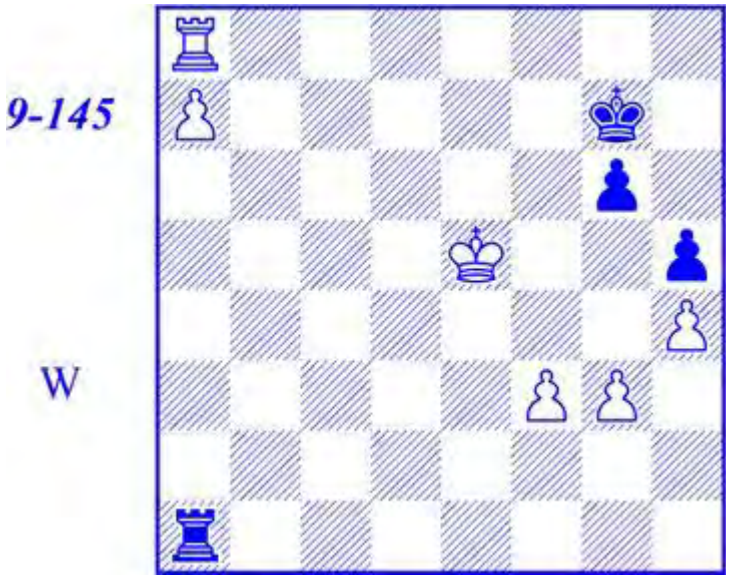
example, White fails to get a passed f-pawn. The winning way was 1 Kd4! R×f2 2 Rc8 Rb2 3 Rc7+ Kg6 4 b7 etc.

1…Kg7 2 Kd4 Rb5 3 Kc4 Rb2 4 Kd5 Rd2+! 5 Ke5 Re2+ 6 K×f5 R×f2+ 7 K×g4 Rb2

Even two extra pawns cannot bring the advantage home. The game was drawn.

A slightly more complicated example of the same theme.

R. Kholmov, 1983



Here again, two extra pawns are not sufficient for a win. Black can easily prevent creation of a passed f-pawn.

1 Kf4

The threat is 2 g4 Ra4+ (2…hg 3 K×g4 △ h4-h5+–) 4 Kg3 hg 5 f4!, followed by h4-h5. The immediate 1 g4 hg 2 fg leads to an obvious draw. Black need only remember to harass his opponent with checks from the rear when the white king comes to the sixth rank, otherwise a winning pawn endgame can arise.

1…Ra4+! 2 Ke3 Ra3+ 3 Kf2 Ra2+ 4 Kg1 Ra1+! (the simplest, although 4…Ra3 5 g4 hg 6 f4! Kh7! also holds) **5 Kg2 Ra2+ 6 Kh3 Ra3**

6…Ra4 7 f4 Ra3 is also good.

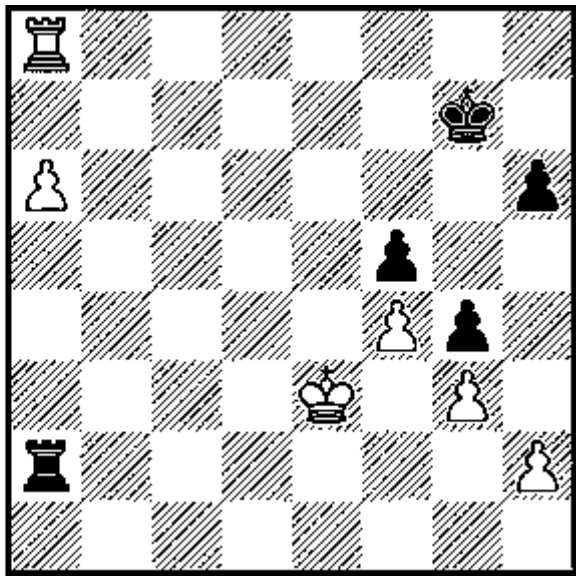
7 f4 Ra2 8 g4 Ra3+

The king can only escape from the checks by approaching the rook, but this is too dangerous: Black takes on g4 and his g-pawn rushes to the promotion square.

Let us examine two considerably more complex and eventful examples.

M. Dvoretsky, 2003

9-146
$



W?

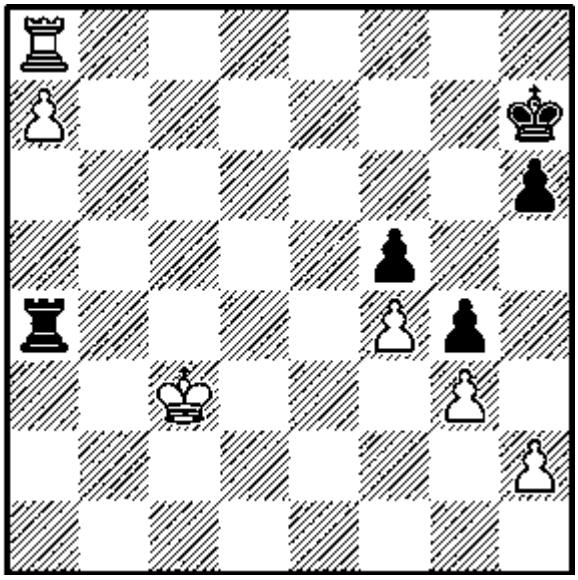
1 a7!

White's plan is clear: his king will go after the f5-pawn. If the Black h-pawn were at h5, White would win without the slightest difficulty – just as he does in diagram 9-143. However, with the pawn at h6 instead, Black has counter-chances involving the attempt to zip the king up in the stalemate haven at h5. With this configuration, this stalemate defense is well-known from pawn endgames; it does not appear to have been employed before in a rook endgame.

After 1 Kd4? R×h2 2 Ke5, Black saves himself by playing for stalemate: 2…Kg6! 3 a7 Ra2 4 Rg8+ Kh5 5 a8Q Ra5(e2)+ – the rook has become a desperado, or 3 Rg8+ Kh5 4 Rf8 Re2+! 5 K×f5 (5 Kd6 Ra2=) 5…Re8!=.

1…Ra4 2 Kd3 Kh7 3 Kc3

9-147



B

3…Kg7

The clever attempt 3…Kg6!?, suggested by Gansäuer, is refuted by means of 4 h3!! gh (4…Kh5 5 hg+ K×g4 6 Rg8+ Kh5 7 g4+!) 5 Rg8+ Kh5 6 a8Q R×a8 7 R×a8 Kg4 8 Kd4 h2 9 Ra1 K×g3 10 Ke5+–. Note that White wins only because his king can get to e5 in time. If White's king had been cut off on the second rank in the starting position, then as soon as it gets to c2 (or even d2), Black plays …Kg6!, and the move h2-h3 no longer works.

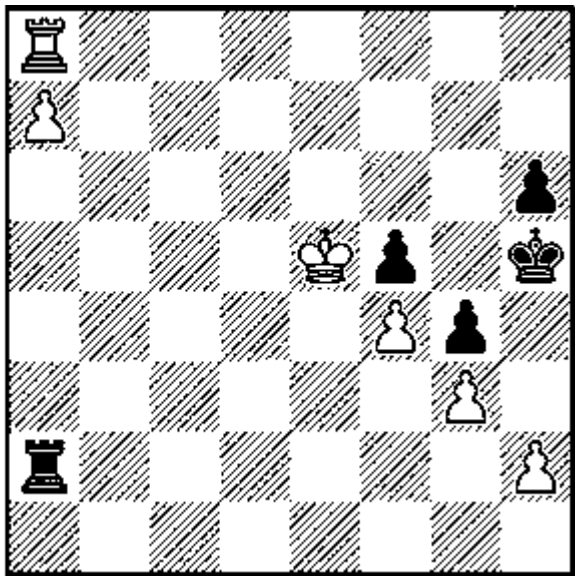
But what would happen if Black's king could reach h5? We shall see about this in the next annotation.

4 Kb3 Ra6 5 Kc4!

5 Kb4? is incorrect because of 5…Kg6!, as the move 6 h3 no longer works since the white king is too far away from the f5-pawn. Interesting lines arise after 6 Kc5 Kh5! 7 Kd5 Ra2 8 Ke5.

9-148

B?



The obvious 8…Ra5+? 9 Ke6 Ra6+ (9…Kg6 10 h3!!) 10 K×f5 R×a7 would lose to 11 h3!! Rf7+ (mate was threatened) 12 Ke6 Rb7 13 hg+ (13 Ra5+ Kg6 14 hg Rb3 is less convincing) 13…K×g4 14 Rg8+ Kh5 15 g4+ Kh4 16 f5.

8…Re2+! 9 K×f5 Re7!! (but not 9…Re8? 10 h3!!+–) is much stronger. It is reciprocal zugzwang! If 10 Kf6?, Black can already sacrifice his rook: 10…Re8!=. So White must give up his a-pawn: 10 Rd8 R×a7, but here I do not see a clear way to win. For example, 11 Ke6 Kg6 12 f5+? Kg5 13 Rg8+ Kh5= or 11 Rd5 Ra6.

5…Ra5 6 Kb4 Ra1 7 Kc5 Ra6 8 Kd5 Ra1 9 Ke5 Ra5+ 10 Ke6⊙ Kg6!?

On 10…Kh7, the simplest reply is 11 Kf6⊙. Also possible is 11 Rd8 R×a7 12 K×f5, obtaining a won ending with all the pawns on the same side – though not, of course, 12 Rd7+? R×d7 13 K×d7 Kg6 14 Ke6 Kh5!=.

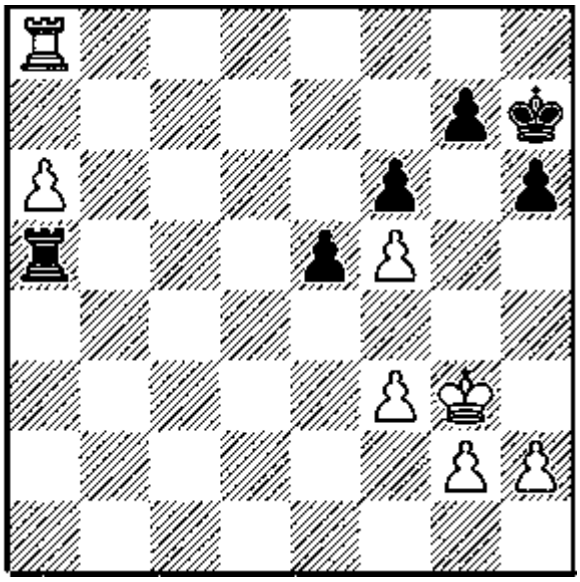
11 h3!! Ra6+ 12 Ke7 gh 13 Rg8+ Kh5 14 a8Q R×a8 15 R×a8 Kg4 16 Kf6+–.

Zurakhov – Vaisman

USSR 1966

9-149

W



1 a7?!

Leaving the pawn on a6 made more sense. White could then have played h2-h4-h5 and Ra7, after which his king goes to the queenside at the cost of the g-pawn (or the f3-pawn if he could not avoid g2-g4). The win would be rather easy because the black king would be forever locked on h7.

With his actual move, White plans h2-h4 and g2-g4-g5. After a forced double capture on g5, he wants to take the g5 and e5 pawns with his king and to play f5-f6 thereafter.

1…Ra2

If 1…Ra3!? (△ 2…e4!=), then both 2 Kg4 and 2 Kf2 are good. Black only postpones an advance of the white kingside pawns for a while but cannot prevent it.

2 h4 Ra3

2…h5? loses immediately. After 3 Kh3, Black has no defense against g2-g4-g5-g6+.

3 Kh2

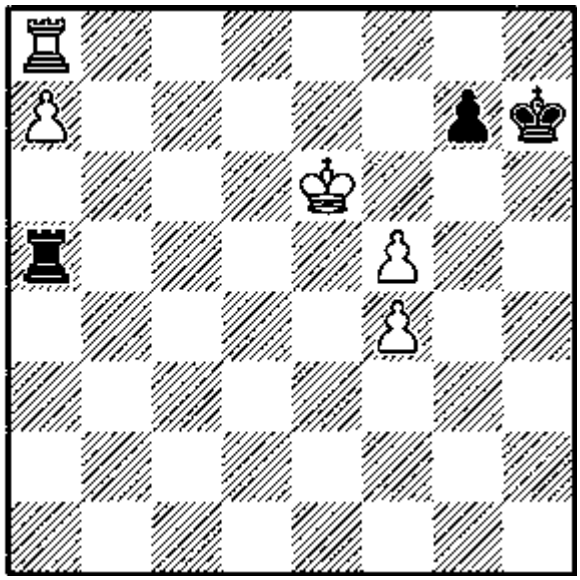
This is correct. White's task is simpler when the king hides behind the pawns. 3 Kg4 Ra4+ 4 Kh5 is also playable, but then White has to show more attention and accuracy. Black would respond with 4…Ra5!?, and in case of the indecisive 5 g3?, Would save the game by means of 5…e4! 6 fe g6+ 7 Kg4 gf+ (rather than 7…h5+? 8 Kf4 gf 9 Rf8! R×a7 10 K×f5 Rg7 11 R×f6 R×g3 12 e5) 8 ef Kg7 9 Kf4 h5=.

After 5 g4!, however, both 5…g6+? 6 fg+ Kg7 7 g5 hg 8 hg fg (8…e4 9 Re8!) 9 Kg4!⊙+– and 5…e4? 6 g5 (6 fe?? g6#) 6…hg 7 hg g6+ 8 fg+ Kg7 9 Re8!+– (or 9 f4!? f5 10 Re8 R×a7 11 Re5+–) fail. Black has to play 5…Ra1 6 g5 hg 7 hg fg, transposing to the game continuation.

3…Ra2 4 Kh3 Ra3 5 g3⊙ Ra2 6 g4 Ra3 7 Kg2 Ra2+ 8 Kg3 Ra4 9 g5 hg 10 hg fg 11 Kh3 Rh4+ 12 Kg2 Ra4 13 Kg3⊙ Ra1 14 Kg4 Rg1+ 15 Kh5 Ra1 16 K×g5 Ra6 17 Kg4 Ra3 18 Kh4⊙ Ra4+ 19 Kh3 Ra2 20 Kg3⊙ Ra5 21 Kf2 Ra3 22 Ke2 Ra5 23 Kd3 Ra4 24 Kc3 Ra1 25 Kb4 Ra2 26 Kc5 Ra1 27 Kd6 Ra5 28 Ke6 Ra1 29 K×e5 Ra6 30 f4 Ra5+ 31 Ke6

9-150

B?



31…Ra1!

31…Ra6+? loses to 32 Ke7!⊙ Ra4 33 f6! gf 34 Kf7!⊙ Ra6 (34…f5 35 Ke6 Ra5 36 Kf6⊙+–) 35 f5⊙. The same zugzwang position (with Black on move) arises after 31…Ra4? 32 Kf7! Ra6 33 Ke7.

Now 32 f6 does not bring an easy win in view of 32…Ra6+ 33 Ke7 (33 Kf7 R×f6+) 33…gf 34 Kf7 (34 f5 Kg7) 34…Ra4! 35 f5 Ra6⊙.

32 Ke7 Ra6!

Only this prevents the menacing advance f5-f6. 32…Ra4? 33 f6 gf 34 Kf7⊙ is an error. We may come to the conclusion that the squares f7-a4 and e7-a6 are corresponding; this is a case of reciprocal zugzwang. And if Black defends himself correctly, he does not fall into the zugzwang.

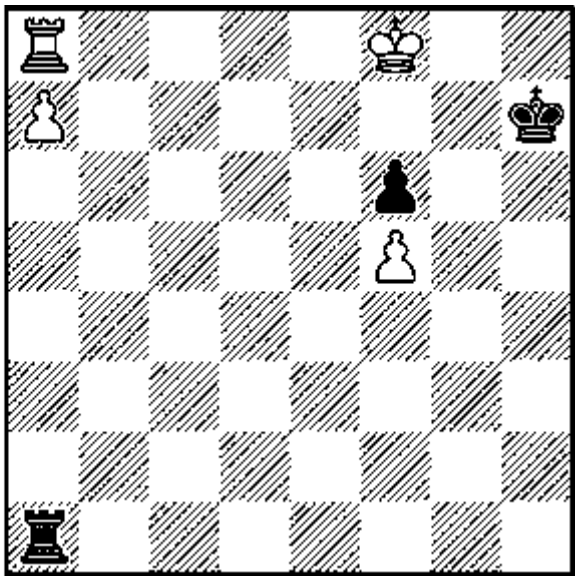
33 Kf7 Ra4!

On 33…Rf6+?, White could have passed the move to his adversary by means of triangulation: 34 Ke8! Ra6 35 Ke7⊙+–.

34 Kf8 (34 f6 gf 35 f5 Ra6⊙) **34…Ra5** (34…Ra6? 35 Ke7⊙+–) **35 f6** (he has nothing else) **35…gf 36 f5 Ra1** (36…Ra6? 37 Kf7!⊙+–)

9-151

W?



37 Re8?

This natural move (White intends a transition to a winning pawn endgame) is wrong. Black has a defense based upon stalemate! Dolmatov suggested the correct procedure:

37 Kf7! (it is important to drive the rook to a6) 37…Ra6 38 Ke7! (by the way, after the immediate 37 Ke7? Kg7, there is no longer a win) 38…Kg7 (White could of course have had this position earlier) 39 Kd8! (39 Ke8?! Kg8!) 39…Ra1 (both 39…Kg8 40 Kc7+ Kg7 41 Kb7 and 39…Kh6 40 Kc7 Kg5 41 Rg8+ K×f5 42 a8Q R×a8 43 R×a8 are hopeless) 40 Rc8! R×a7 41 Rc7+ R×c7 42 K×c7 Kh6 43 Kd7 Kh5 44 Ke7! Kg5 45 Ke6⊙+–.

37…R×a7 38 Re7+ Kh8! 39 Kf7

White cannot take the rook because of stalemate. Hence he goes for the f6-pawn.

39…Ra6 (39…Ra1 is also good) **40 Kg6 Ra8 41 K×f6 Kg8??**

A serious mistake when the goal was within reach. The draw could be achieved by means of 41…Ra6+ (41…Ra1) 42 Re6 (42 Kf7 Kh7 43 f6 Ra8, or 43…Ra1, but not 43…Rb6??) 42…Ra1! 43 Kg6 Rg1+ 44 Kf7 Kh7 (44…Rg7+) 45 f6 Rg7+! 46 Ke8 (46 fg – stalemate) 46…Rg8+, and the rook returns to the long side.

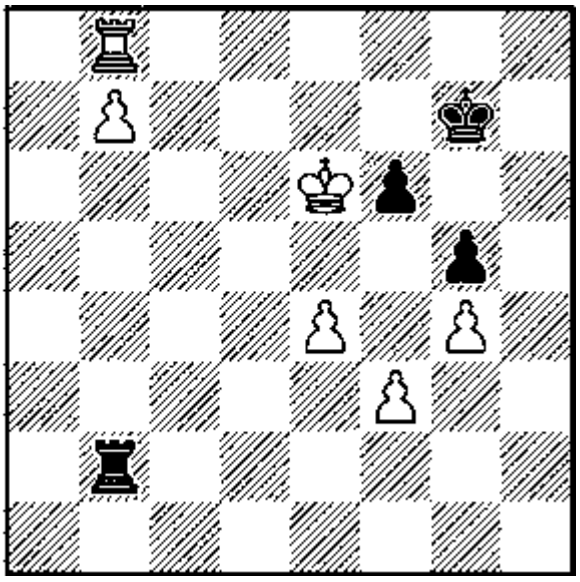
42 Kg6 Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Pähtz – Kosteniuk
Mainz m (5) 2002

9-152

W?



The main distinction between this position and the very similar endgame Benko-Gereben

(diagram 9-140), is that here White has a pawn at f3, thanks to which every possible pawn endgame is won. An elementary path to victory lay in 1 Rd8! Rb6+ 2 Rd6 R×b7 3 Rd7+ R×d7 4 K×d7.

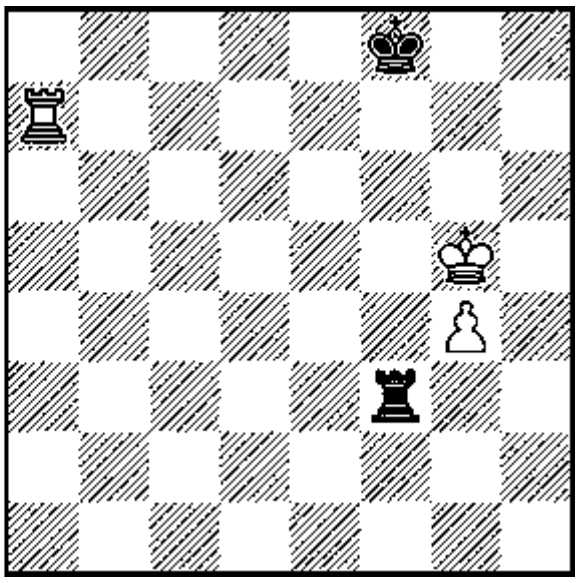
1 Re8?? Rb6+! 2 Kf5 R×b7

The position has now become drawn – but the adventures have not ended yet.

3 e5 fe 4 R×e5 Rf7+ 5 K×g5 R×f3 6 Re7+ Kf8 7 Ra7

9-153

B?



7…Rc3??

7…Kg8! 8 Kg6 Rf8= was necessary. As we know, against a knight pawn, passive defense by the rook on the eighth rank guarantees a draw.

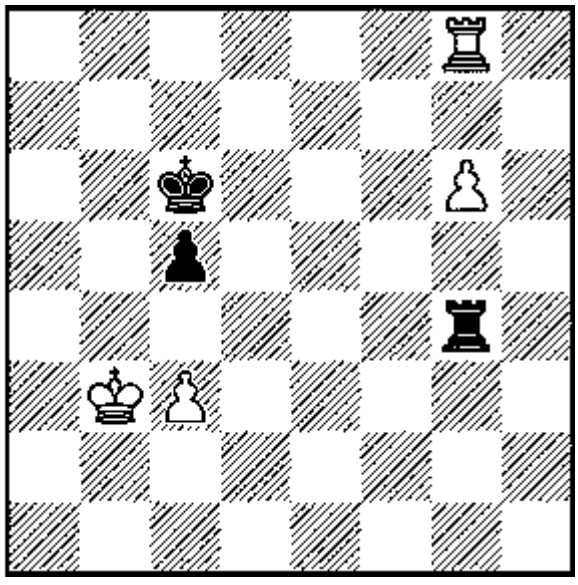
8 Kh5?? After 8 Kg6! White must reach the "Lucena Position," for example, 8…Rc6+ 9 Kh7 Rc5 10 Rg7.

8…Kg8 9 Rd7 Rc6 And now we have reached "Philidor's Position." The game was eventually drawn.

Ljubojevic – Gligoric
Belgrade m (9) 1979

9-154

W



1 g7 Kb7??

1…c4+! 2 Kb4 Kb7 3 Kb5 Ka7 led to a draw. White's king cannot stop both the rook and the king at the same time. After 4 Kc6, the rook is released from the burden of protecting the pawn.

2 c4! Rg2 3 Kc3

Black resigned. The white king goes through the center to the c5-pawn and wins it by means of

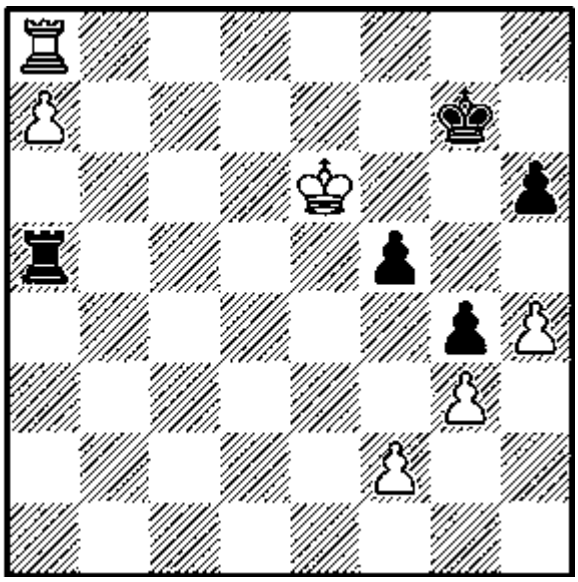
zugzwang.

Milic and Bozic annotated this endgame for the *Chess Informant* 27. In their opinion, White could have won after 1 c4 Rg3+ 2 Kc2. But they are obviously wrong: 2…Kd6 3 g7 Ke6(e7) leads to a drawn pawn endgame, while after 2 Ka4 Kb6 3 g7 Kb7 4 Kb5 Rg5 5 Ka4 Rg3! White's king cannot break loose.

Y. Averbakh

9-155

B



This example is taken from Averbakh's endgame handbook. It is amusing not only in itself, but also because of several grave errors committed by this famous connoisseur of endgame theory. Averbakh believes the position is drawn on account of 1…Ra2 2 K×f5 R×f2+ 3 K×g4 Ra2=. Black applied this defensive method in a similar situation in Rovner-Shchipunov (diagram 9-144). But there, first of all, White's king was less active and he was unable to force the exchange of rooks. Secondly, White's pawn was at h2, which means the pawn endgame would still have been a draw. But here, with the pawn at h4, the pawn endgame is won!

2 Re8! (instead of 2 K×f5?) 2…R×a7 (2…Ra6+ 3 K×f5 R×a7 4 K×g4) 3 Re7+ R×e7+ 4 K×e7 Kg6 5 Ke6 Kh5 (Black's last hope is a chance for stalemate) 6 Kf6!⊙ f4 7 gf K×h4 8 Kg6+– (or 8 f5+–).

Another try is **1…h5!?**. Levenfish and Smyslov analyze this in their book on rook-and-pawn endings. They convincingly prove that the outcome depends on whose turn in is to move.

Black, if on move, achieves a draw as follows: 2…Ra6+! 3 K×f5 Ra5+ 4 Kf4 Ra4+, or 3 Ke5 Ra2! (3…Ra3? is wrong in view of 4 Kf4 Ra5 5 Rb8 R×a7 6 Kg5, but 3…Ra4!= is also playable) 4 Kf4 R×f2+ 5 Kg5 Ra2 6 K×h5 f4!=.

If White is on move, he wins by 2 Re8! Ra6+ (2…R×a7 3 Re7+) 3 K×f5 R×a7 4 Re5! (Averbakh only examines 4 Kg5? Ra5+ 5 Kf4 Ra2=) 4…Kh6 (otherwise 5 Kg5) 5 Re6+ Kg7 6 Rg6+ Kh7 7 Rf6! (△ 8 Kg5) 7…Ra5+ (7…Rg7 8 Rf8⊙) 8 Kf4 Ra2 (8…Kg7 9 Rf5) 9 Kg5 Ra5+ 10 Rf5+–.

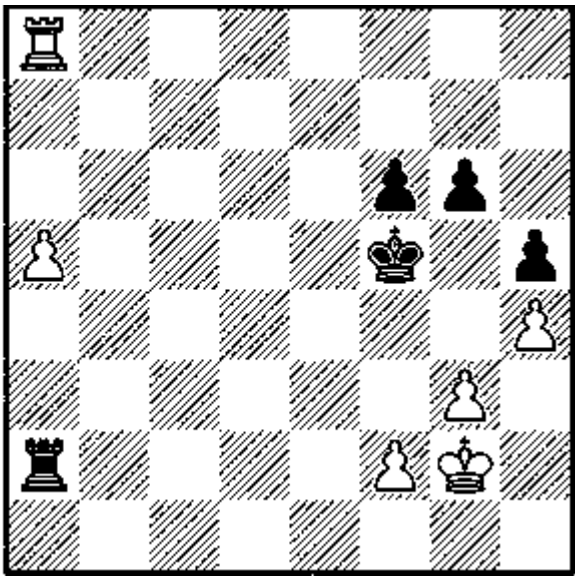
Averbakh's evaluations are the opposite: he suggests passing the move to the adversary. Therefore almost all his analysis is erroneous!

2 Kd6? (! Averbakh) **2…Kh7?** (2…Ra6+!) **3 Ke7?** (3 Kc6! Ra2 4 Rd8! R×a7 5 Rd7+ R×d7 6 K×d7 and 3 Ke6! Kg7 4 Re8! or 3…Ra6+ 4 Ke5! Kg7 5 Kf4! are winning) **3…Kg7 4 Ke6 Ra2?** (4…Ra6+!) **5 K×f5?** (5 Re8!+–) **5…Ra5+** (5…R×f2+? 6 Kg5 Ra2 7 K×h5 Ra4 8 Re8 R×a7 9 K×g4) **6 Kf4 Kh7??** (6…Ra4+ is a draw) **7 Rf8! R×a7 8 Kg5 Ra5+ 9 Rf5**+–.

Exercises

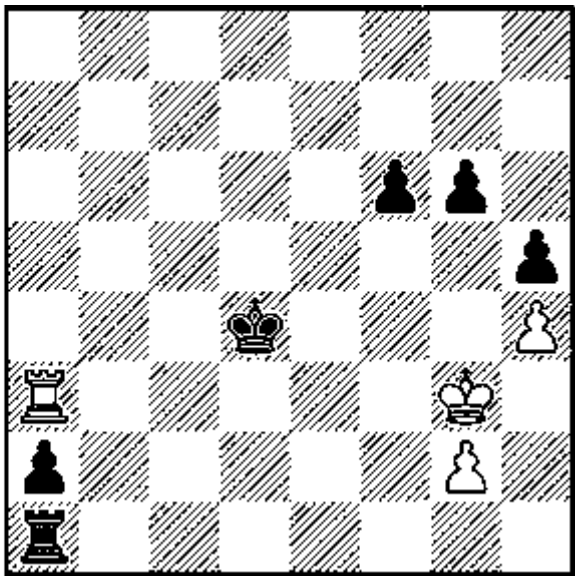
These two exercises are not complicated; in fact, they could have been included in the previous "Tragicomedies."

9-156



9/21
B?

9-157



9/22
W?

The Rook in Front of the Pawn, with the Pawn on the Sixth Rank

If a pawn advance to a7 makes no sense, White leaves the pawn on a6 and brings his king to the queenside where it has a refuge against vertical checks. But it is a long way to go, leaving the black rook enough time to capture one or two pawns, before it must be sacrificed for the a-pawn. This leads to a sharp “Rook vs. Pawns” endgame, the outcome of which will depend on whether White’s king can get back to the kingside in time.

For many years, it was believed that with correct defense, the draw was an easy matter, something Black could achieve with a couple of tempi to spare. This point of view was espoused in, among other places, earlier editions of my *Endgame Manual*.

In the latter half of 2003, the theory of this portion of the endgame underwent some revolutionary changes. Black’s position, it turned out, was far more dangerous than it had seemed.

Johannes Steckner, a Swiss player, while checking the analysis of one of the basic positions which had been considered drawn, found a tremendous improvement for White, leading to a win for him. And his discovery led, in turn, to new researches which were conducted by Steckner, grandmasters Karsten Müller and Rustem Dautov, along with other endgame connoisseurs. The results of our research are reflected in the Russian edition of the *Endgame Manual*, as well as the second and third releases of the American edition and the second, third and fourth releases of the German edition.

The development of this theory has not remained static. In late 2011, an Armenian chess aficionado, Vardan Pogosyan, provided additional support that the position under consideration was nevertheless still drawn. Pogosyan also made substantial refinements in the analysis of other endings included in this section of the *Endgame Manual*.

Here I shall present only the most important and interesting variations, omitting many of the analytical details. For those who seek more detailed information, I would recommend visiting www.chesscafe.com and looking for my article published in October/November 2003, as well as articles by Karsten Müller, the last of which, dedicated to Pogosyan's discoveries, was published in March 2012.

Nevertheless, even in edited form, the material I offer for your consideration is so large and complex, that it clearly exceeds the boundaries I tried to maintain when I wrote this *Endgame Manual*. The excuse I offer is its newness and enormous practical significance to the theory of this sort of endgame.

Nothing could be further from my mind than to label the analysis presented below as the "last word of theory," for long, complicated variations rarely turn out error-free. But in any case, they go a long way to correct and develop the pre-existing conclusions, and may in turn serve as a starting point for additional theoretical researches.

V. Kantorovich, 1988
J. Steckner, 2003

9-158

W

In 1989, Vadim Kantorovich, of Moscow, published an interesting article titled, *The Outside Passed Pawn*. The article opened with the diagrammed position. The main conclusion of the analysis was: Black draws with two tempi to spare.

In fact, he is almost lost. But, it turns out, "almost!"

1 Kd4!

The pawn must be sacrificed ***precisely*** with the rook on a7! 1 Ra8? Kf5 would be much weaker. Please note that ***Black's pieces are optimally placed: the rook holds the f-pawn in the crosshairs, while the king occupies the most active available square***.

Black would have an easy draw after 2 Kd4 R×f2 3 Rf8 Ra2 4 R×f7+ Kg4= (Kantorovich) or 2 f3 Ra3+ 3 Kd4 R×f3 4 Rf8 Ra3 5 R×f7+ Kg4 6 Rf6 K×g3 7 R×g6+ K×h4 8 Kc5 Kh3 9 Kb6 h4= (Fine).

On 2 Ra7!?, the king should not pull back with 2…Ke6? or 2…Kf6?, but immediately begin counterplay by 2…f6!? (2…Kg4 3 R×f7 R×a6 does not lose, either). After 3 Kf3 g5! 4 hg fg 5 Ra8 g4+ 6 Ke3 Kg6, the king gets back to g7, so White plays 3 Ra8 instead, threatening to obtain a winning position with the pawn on the seventh, known to us from the Unzicker-Lundin game (diagram 9-141), by 4 f3 Ra3+ 5 Ke2 Ra2+ 6 Kd1 Ra3 7 a7. But Black draws by playing 3…Kg4 4 a7 f5!? (4…Ra3+ 5 Ke4 f5+ 6 Ke5 Kf3= is also good) 5 Rg8 f4+! 6 gf Ra3+ 7 Ke4 (7 Ke2 R×a7 8 R×g6+ K×f4=) 7…Ra4+ 8 Ke5 Ra5+ 9 Ke6 Ra6+ 10 Kf7 R×a7+ 11 K×g6 Ra6+ 12 Kf7+ K×f4= (analysis by Dvoretsky).

1…R×f2 2 Rc7! Ra2 3 a7

On 3 Rc6+? Kf5 4 Kc5 Kg4 5 Kb5 K×g3 6 Rc4 f6! 7 Ra4 Rb2+ 8 Kc6 Rb8 9 a7 Ra8

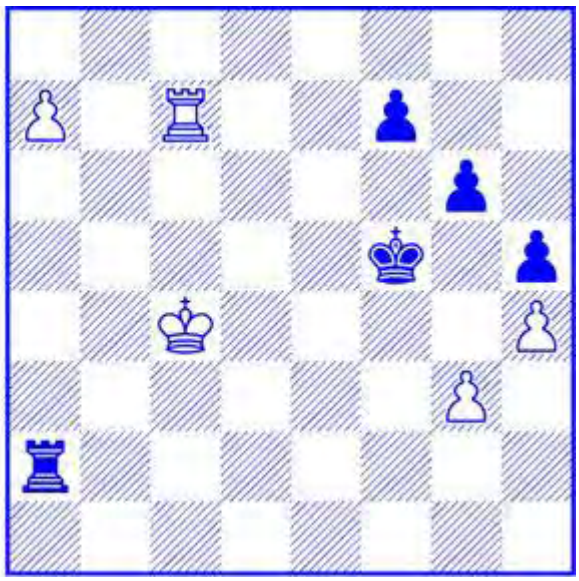
(Kantorovich), Black does indeed obtain a draw with two tempi to spare.

3…Kf5

Kantorovich's analysis continued 4 R×f7+ Kg4 5 Kc5 K×g3 6 Kb5! Rb2+! 7 Kc6 Ra2 8 Kb7 K×h4 9 Rf6 R×a7+ – here too, the draw is completely obvious.

It was Steckner who offered the powerful improvement: **4 Kc4!!**.

9-159



B

His idea becomes clear in the variation **4…Kg4 5 Kb3! Ra6 6 Rc4+ K×g3 7 Ra4**.

Now White forces the sacrifice of Black's rook without wasting time on the king's long march to a7, and wins move-on-move ("Chess is the tragedy of a single tempo!").

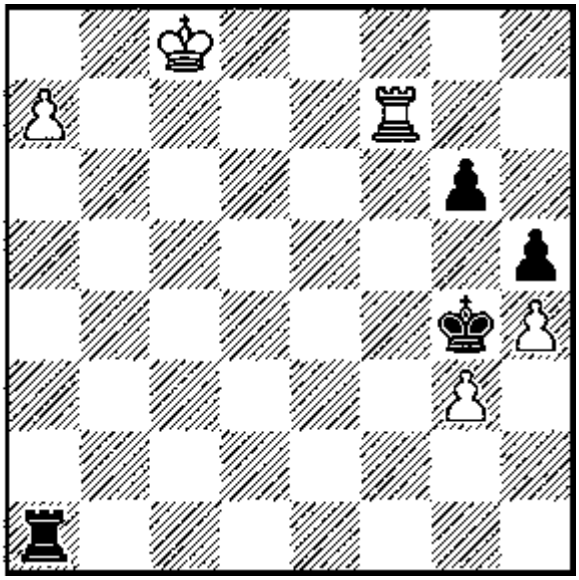
7…R×a7 8 R×a7 K×h4 9 Kc3 (there is no time to take the pawn: 9 R×f7? Kg3=) **9…Kg3**.

9…f5 10 Kd3 g5 does not help: the rook can deal with all three pawns.

10 Kd2 h4 (10…g5 11 R×f7+–) **11 Ke2 Kg2** (11…h3 12 Kf1) **12 R×f7 h3 13 Rf2+! Kg3 14 Rf6**+–

Let's try a different defense, such as 4…Ra1, getting the rook away from the tempo-gaining Kb3. After 5 Kb5 however, the only way to forestall the threat of closing off the a-file is by a series of checks, which drive the white king forward: 5…Rb1+ 6 Kc6 Ra1 7 Kb7 Rb1+ 8 Kc8 Ra1 9 R×f7+ Kg4.

9-160



W?

Here 10 Kb7 Rb1+ is useless; and 10 Kb8? K×g3 11 Rf6 K×h4 12 R×g6 Kh3 13 Kb7 R×a7+ is only a draw. White gains the tempo he needs by 10 Rg7! K×g3 11 R×g6+ K×h4 12 Kb7 R×a7+ (13 Ra6 was threatened) 13 K×a7 Kh3 14 Kb6 h4 15 Kc5 Kh2 16 Kd4 h3 17 Ke3 Kh1 18 Kf3+–.

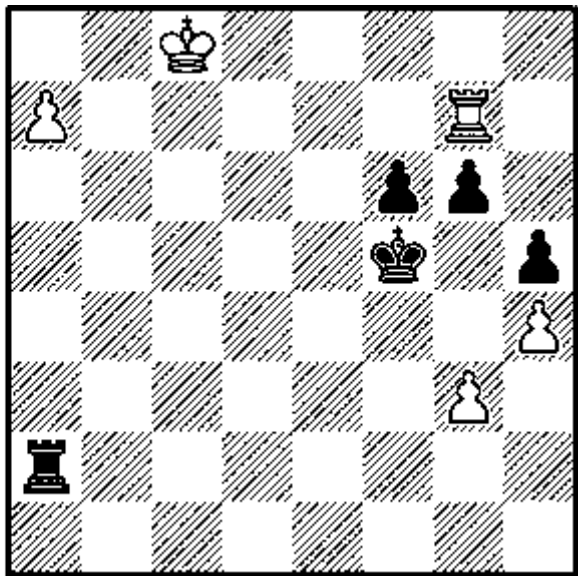
The only thing left to try is 4…f6. White cannot respond with 5 Kb4? Kg4 6 Kb3 Ra6 7 Rc4+ K×g3 8 Ra4 R×a7 – by comparison with the line 4…Kg4, Black has gained the useful move

…f7-f6, which alters the assessment of the position (9 R×a7 g5=). Now comes a series of forced moves: 5 Kb5 Rb2+ 6 Kc6 Ra2 7 Kb7 Rb2+ 8 Kc8 Ra2.

Alas, White wins here too, with 9 Rg7!.

9-161

B



(a) 9…g5 10 Kb8 Kg4 11 a8Q (but not 11 hg? fg 12 a8Q R×a8+ 13 K×a8 h4 14 gh K×h4 15 Kb7 g4 16 Kc6 Kg3! 17 Kd5 Kf3=) 11…R×a8+ 12 K×a8 K×g3 13 hg fg 14 R×g5+ Kh4 15 Rg8 Kh3 16 Kb7, and the king gets back to f3 in time.

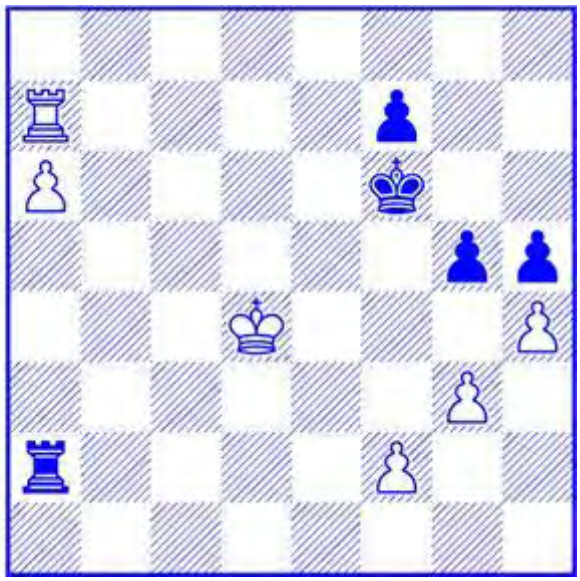
(b) 9…Kg4 10 R×g6+ Kh3 11 Rg7 Ra3 12 Kb8 Rb3+ 13 Rb7 R×g3 14 Kc7!? (14 Rb4 is also strong) 14…Ra3 (14…Rg8 15 Rb8 Rg7+ 16 Kb6 R×a7 17 K×a7+–) 15 Rb3+! R×b3 16 a8Q.

At the start of this section, I presented a formula in the most general terms for how play might develop in this kind of ending. Now we can more precisely restate White's most dangerous plan. ***The pawn advances to a6; the rook stands on a7, and at the first opportunity will move aside to c7, clearing the path of the pawn. White's king selects a path to advance which will allow him to execute the interference idea as quickly as possible – that is, moving the rook with tempo to the a-file.***

Let's return to diagram 9-158. As Pogosyan has proven, Black still saves himself if, in reply to **1 Kd4!**, he refrains from the immediate capture of the f2-pawn in favor of **1…g5!!**.

9-162

W



I studied this position with Black to move, and, like other analysts, concluded that Black is able to achieve a draw, although not without difficulty. As it turned out, the extra tempo for White does not change this evaluation.

2 hg+ K×g5 is not dangerous. For example, 3 Kc5 (there is also nothing in 3 f3 h4 4 f4+ Kg4 5

gh K×h4 6 Ke5 Kg4=) 3…Kg4 4 Kb5 (4 R×f7 R×a6=) 4…R×f2 5 Ra8 (5 Rb7 K×g3 6 a7 Ra2) 5…Rb2+ (only not 5…K×g3? 6 Rg8+ Kf3 7 a7 Ra2 8 a8Q+ R×a8 9 R×a8 h4 10 Rh8! Kg3 11 Kc4+–) 6 Kc4 Ra2 7 Rg8+ Kf3 8 Kb5 Rb2+ 9 Kc6 Ra2 10 Kb7 Rb2+ 11 Ka8 f5 (or 11…Rb6 12 a7 f5 13 Rg5 Rb5 14 Rg7 f4=) 12 Rg5 f4 13 gf h4 14 f5 Kf4 15 Rh5 Kg4 16 Rh8 K×f5 17 R×h4 Ke6, and a well-known theoretically drawn position has been reached: if the white rook tries to get to b8 to free the king from its imprisonment, the black king will have time to get to c7 (my variations).

On 2 f3, there follows 2…gh 3 gh Ke6 4 Kc5 Ke5 5 Kb6 (Black's task is easier after 5 Ra8 Kf4) 5…Rb2+ 6 Kc7 Ra2! (6…Rc2+? 7 Kd8! f5 8 Rh7 Ra2 9 Rh6! Kf4 10 Kc7 K×f3 11 Kb7 Kg3 12 a7 R×a7+ 13 K×a7 K×h4 14 Kb6 loses) 7 Kb8 f6! 8 Re7+ Kd6! 9 Rf7 Ke6 10 Ra7 Kf5(e5)= (analysis by Wilbur Micawber).

The strongest continuation is **2 Kd5!**. 2…gh? 3 gh now comes to mind, which, according to Pogosyan's analysis, does not draw. This is underscored by the fact that Black does not have a move which immediately improves the situation on the kingside.

(1) Completely hopeless is 3…Kf5 4 R×f7+ Kg4 5 a7 K×h4 6 Rg7.

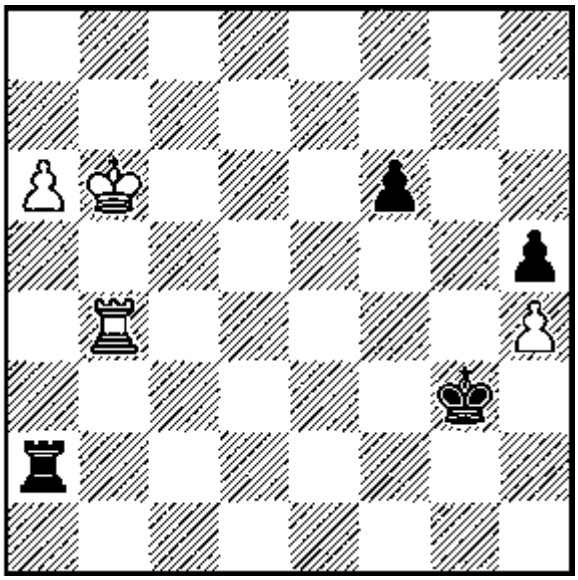
(2) If 3…R×f2, then 4 Rc7 Ra2 5 a7 Kf5 6 Kc4 (but not 6 R×f7+? Kg4=) 6…Kg4 7 Kb3 Ra1 8 Rc4+ Kg3 9 Ra4+– or 6…Ra1 7 Kb5 Rb1+ 8 Kc6 Ra1 9 Kb7+–.

(3) On 3…Kg6, White replies 4 Kc6 (4 Ra8? Kf5 5 Kc6 Kg4= is premature). If 4…f5, then 5 f4+–.

(3a) The variation 4…f6 5 Ra8! Kf5 6 Kb7 Rb2+ 7 Ka7 Kg4 8 Rb8 R×f2 9 Rb4+ Kg3 10 Kb6! Ra2 leads to an instructive situation which I once studied some time ago; it also arises in several other lines.

9-163

W



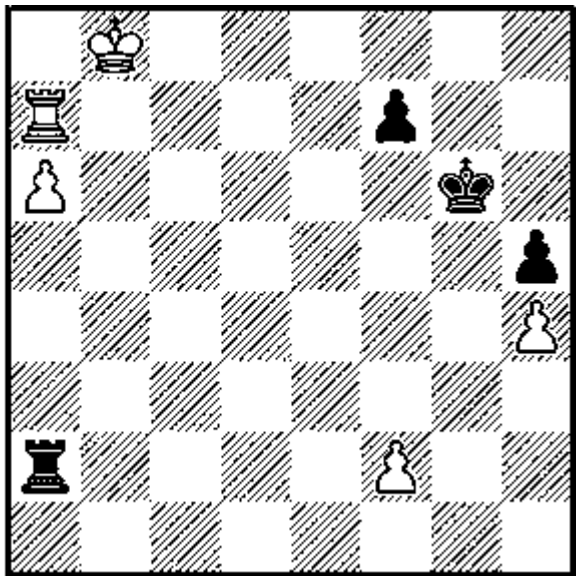
11 Kb5! is the simplest win: 11…f5 12 Ra4 Rb2+ 13 Kc6 Rb8 14 a7 Ra8 15 Kb7 Re8 16 a8Q R×a8 17 R×a8!.

Also possible is 11 Rb5 K×h4 12 Ra5 Rb2+ 13 Kc7, and on 13…Rg2, not 14 a7? Rg8 15 a8Q R×a8 16 R×a8 Kg3 17 Rg8+ Kf3 18 Rh8 f5=, but 14 Ra1!! (Steckner) 14…Kh3 (not 14…Rg8 15 Rh1+) 15 a7 Rg8 16 Rh1+ Kg2 17 R×h5+–.

In the last line, as we shall soon see, things become even more complicated and interesting if the f6-pawn is put back on f7.

(3b) Let's take a look at 4…Rc2+ 5 Kb6 Rb2+ 6 Kc7 Rc2+ 7 Kb8 (on 7 Kd7, Black must not reply 7…Ra2? 8 Kc8, but 7…R×f2 8 Rb7 Ra2) 7…Ra2.

9-164



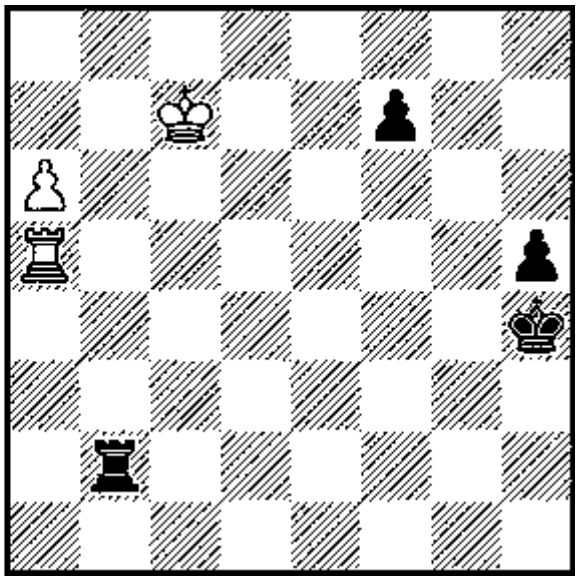
W

8 f3 is tempting, and if 8…Ra3, then 9 Kc7 R×f3 (checking is pointless, as the distance between the king and rook is shorter and the king simply approaches the rook.) 10 Rb7 Ra3 11 a7 Kf5 12 Kb6 Kg4 13 Rb8 K×h4 14.a8Q+–. Only 8…Ra4! saves Black: 9 Kc7 (9 Kc8 R×h4 10 Rc7 Ra4 11 a7 f5!=) 9…R×h4 10 Ra8 Ra4 11 Kb6 Kg5! 12 Rg8+ Kf4= (Dvoretsky).

Stronger for White is 8 Ra8!.

On 8…Kf5 9 Kb7 Rb2+ 10 Ka7 R×f2 11 Rb8 Kg4 12 Rb4+ Kg3 13 Kb6! Ra2, the position in diagram 9-163 arises, but with a black pawn on f7. As has already been shown, 14 Kb5! assures a white win. But the assessment of the line 14 Rb5? K×h4 15 Ra5 Rb2+ 16 Kc7 has changed.

9-165



B?

True, the situation is exactly the same on 16…Rg2? 17 Ra1!!+–, but Black can defend differently. For example, 16…Rc2+ 17 Kd7 Rg2. Here 18 Ra1? does not reach the goal in view of 18…Kh3! 19 a7 Rg8 20 Rh1+ Kg2 21 R×h5 Ra8 22 Ra5 f5=. But 18 a7! Rg8 19 a8Q R×a8 20 R×a8, with the king on d7, does win: 20…Kg3 21 Rg8+! Kf3 22 Rh8! f5 (22…Kg4 23 Kd6+–) 23 Ke6 Ke4 (23…f4 24 Kf5+–), and now the paradoxical kingside turning movement by the king decides: 24 Kf6! f4 25 Kg5 f3 26 Kh4!.

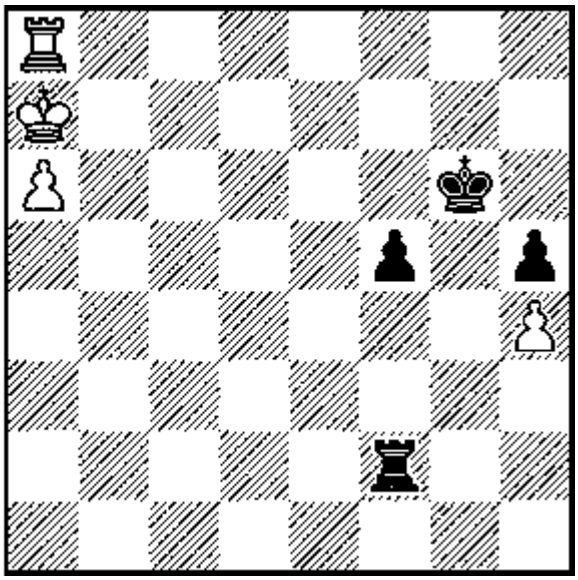
But nevertheless, with the pawn on f7, Black saves himself by 16…Rc2+ 17 Kd7 Rb2!! (or 16…Re2 17 Kd7 Rb2!!) 18 a7 Rb7+ 19 Kd6 R×a7 20 R×a7 Kg3 – his opponent is unable to give the important check with the rook on the g-file. Naturally, with the pawn on f6, this method does not help.

Incidentally, this method does not work with the pawn on f7, if the moves 16…Rg2? 17 Ra1!! are inserted. On 17…Re2, White does not reply either 18 a7? Re8= or 18 Kd7?! Rb2!, but 18 Kd8!! Rg2 (there no longer is 18…Rb2) 19 Ke7+–, and the rook has no right to go to g8.

Let’s propose that, instead of 8…Kf5, Black plays 8…R×f2 9 Ka7 (worse is 9 Kb7 Rb2+ 10

Ka7 Rb4) 9…f5.

9-166

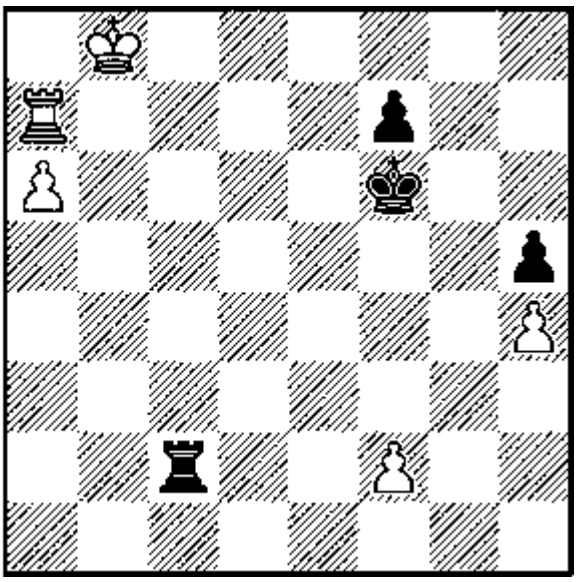


W?

Then only the precise 10 Rf8!, shown by Pogosyan, wins. For example, 10…Kg7 11 Rb8 f4 12 Rb4! f3 13 Rb3!+–, or 10…f4 11 Kb7 Rb2+ 12 Ka8 Rb4 13 a7 f3 14 R×f3 R×h4 15 Rb3! Ra4 16 Rb5!+– (familiar to us from the "rook-versus-pawns ending" – the rook cuts off the king along the fifth rank).

(4) Let's leave the king on f6 and try 3…Rd2+ 4 Kc6 Rc2+ 5 Kb6 Rb2+ 6 Kc7 Rc2+ 7 Kb8.

9-167



B

If now 7…Rc6 8 Kb7 Re6, then 9 f4! is very strong, taking the e5-square away from the rook and thereby neutralizing the threat of checks from the side. On 9…Kf5 or 9…Re1, there follows 10 Ra8, and Black's counterplay comes to late.

However, 7…Ra2 leads to the position in diagram 9-164, but with the king having been moved from g6 to f6. In several lines this difference is significant. For example, after 8 Ra8 R×f2 9 Ka7 Rh2, White, as noted by Pogosyan, takes advantage of the h5-pawn's vulnerability by playing 10 Rh8!. The line 10…R×h4 11 Kb6 is hopeless and 10…Kg6 11 Kb7 Rb2+ 12 Ka8 Rb4 13 a7+– is too slow. Finally, in the variation 10…Ke5 11 R×h5+ (11 Kb7? R×h4=; 11 Kb6!?) 11…f5 12 Kb7 Rb2+ 13 Ka8 Ke4 (13…Kf6 14 a7 f4 15 Rh8!+–) 14 Rh8 f4 15 h5 f3 16 h6 f2, both 17 Rf8 Rd2 18 Kb7 (18 h7? Rd8+) 18…Rd7+ 19 Kc6, and 17 Re8+ followed by 18 Rf8 decide matters.

It is time to avoid the exchange of pawns and go with Pogosyan's recommendation **2…g4!**.

9-168

W

White can direct his king to the passed pawn, to the enemy rook or even to the eighth rank on the kingside. But none of these plans leads to a win if Black defends precisely. He checks and captures the f2-pawn at the appropriate moment and manages to create counterplay.

After 3 Ra8, wrong is 3…Kg7? 4 Kc6 – the king is too far from the center of event. Both 3…Ke7 4 Kc6 Rc2+ 5 Kb7 Rb2+ 6 Ka7 R×f2, and 3…Kf5 4 Kc6 Ke4! are sufficient to draw.

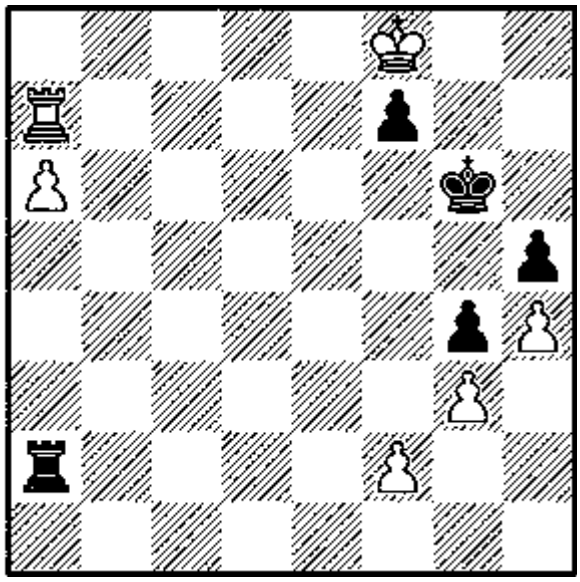
On 3 Kc6 there follows 3…Ke6! (but not 3…Ke5? 4 Kb5 Rb2+ 5 Kc4 Ra2 6 R×f7 R×a6 7 Rh7+– or 5…R×f2 6 Re7+ and 7 a7+–).

3 Kd6 Rd2+ (the most logical) **4 Kc6 Rc2+** (4…Ra2!?)

(1) 5 Kb7 R×f2 6 Ra8 Rb2+ 7 Ka7 Rb3 8 Rh8 R×g3 9 R×h5 Ke6 (to activate the f-pawn) or 9…Rg1 is not dangerous for Black.

(2) 5 Kd7 Ra2 is more interesting (5…R×f2? 6 Rb7 Ra2 7 a7+– is premature) 6 Ke8 (6 Ra8 Ke5!, and the king threatens to break through to f3, while after 7 a7 Kf6, White cannot win) 6…Kg6! 7 Kf8.

9-169



B?

7…R×f2!

This is the right time to eliminate the pawn! Continuing to mark time is no longer justified: 7…Ra3? 8 Ra8 Ra2 9 a7! Ra5 10 Kg8 Ra6 11 Kh8 Kf6 12 Kh7 Ke7 (otherwise 13 Kh6) 13 Rb8! R×a7 14 Kg7 Ke6 15 Rb6+!? (15 Rb5) 15…Ke5 16 Rf6! – as further analysis has confirmed, Black can no longer hold out.

8 Ra8

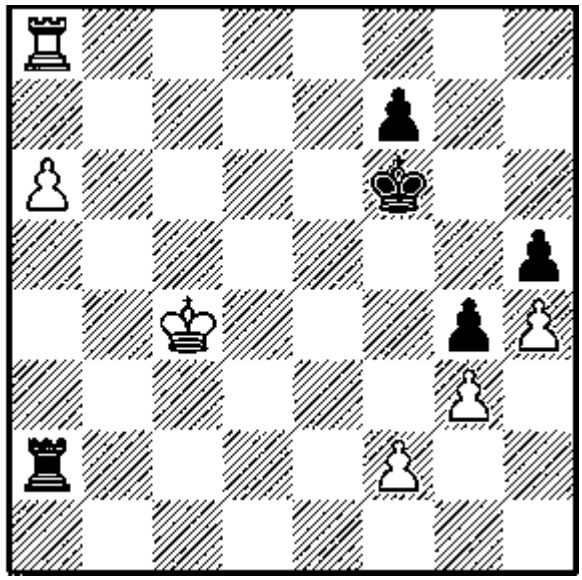
On 8 Rb7, possible are both 8…f6, and 8…f5 9 Rb6+ (9 Kg8 f4! 10 Rg7+ Kf6 11 Rf7+ Ke5 12 gf+ Ke4 13 a7 Ra2 14 f5 g3 15 f6 Kf5=) 9…Kh7 10 Rf6 Ra2 11 Kf7 (11 R×f5 Kg6! 12 Rg5+ Kh6=) 11…f4! 12 gf Ra5 13 f5 g3 14 Ke7 g2 15 Rg6 R×f5 16 R×g2 Ra5=.

8…Ra2 9 a7 Ra3 10 Kg8 Ra6! 11 Kh8 Kf6 12 Kh7 Ke7!, and in the resulting position of reciprocal zugzwang, White is unable to give the move to his opponent: 13 Kg7 Rg6+ 14 Kh8 Rh6+! 15 Kg8 Rg6+ 16 Kh7 Ra6=.

(3) The most complicated problems are probably posed by **5 Kb5 Rb2+ 6 Kc4 Ra2!** (6…R×f2? 7 Rb7 Ra2 8 a7+–) **7 Ra8**.

The idea of having the king approach the enemy rook becomes clear: White manages to free the a7-square for his king without loss of time.

9-170



B?

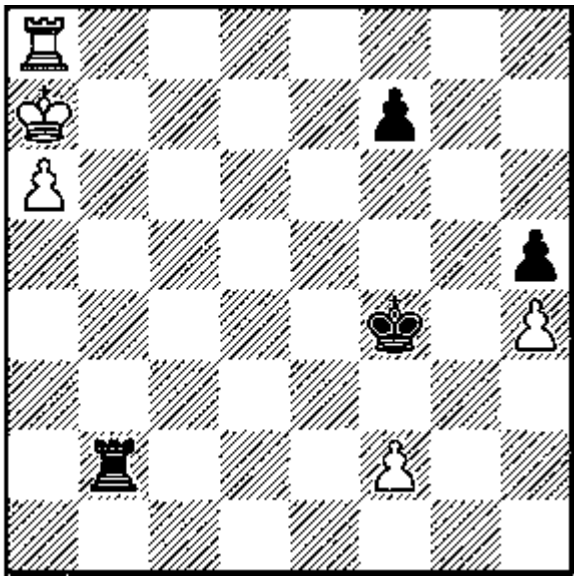
I had analyzed this position in 2003 and considered it won.

7…Kf5 8 Kb5 Rb2+ 9 Kc6 Rc2+ 10 Kb7 Rb2+ 11 Ka7 R:f2 12 Rb8 Ke4 (of course, not 12…Rf3? 13 Rb5+ Ke4 14 Kb6+–), and now the simplest of all is 13 Rb5 Kf3 14 Kb6 Re2 (14…Ra2 15 a7 R×a7 16 Rb3+) 14 a7 Re8 15 Rb3+ Kf2 16 Rc3 f5 17 Kb7+–. Also not bad is 13 Rb4+ Kf3 14 Rb3+ Kg2 15 Kb8! Rf3 16 R×f3! gf 17 a7 f2 18 a8Q+ Kg1 19 Qa7 (had 15 Kb6? been played, this move would not be possible) 19…Kg2 20 Qb7+ Kg1 21 Qb6+–, etc.

Pogosyan found an important improvement for Black: **7…Ke6!!**. After **8 Kb5 Rb2+ 9 Kc6 Rc2+ 10 Kb7 Rb2+ 11 Ka7 R×f2**, the attack on the pawn, 12 Rh8 Rf3 13 K×h5 R×g3, leads to the same drawn position as in the 5 Kb7 variation. The point of Pogosyan's idea is that on **12 Rb8**, the king can be used to neutralize the dangerous passed pawn on the kingside: **12…Kd6!** (or 12…Kd7!) **13 Rb5 Kc6 14 R×h5 Rf3**, and White cannot win. For example, 15 Rh6+ Kc7 16 Rh7 Kc6 17 h5 R×g3 18 R×f7 Rd3 (also possible is 18…Rf3 19 Rg7 g3 20 h6 Rf6! 21 h7 Rf8! 22 Rg6+ Kb5 23 Rg8 g2! 24 R×g2 Rf7+ 25 Kb8 R×h7=) 19 Rf6+ Rd6 20 Rg6 g3 21 Kb8 R×g6 22 hg g2 23 a7 g1Q 24 a8Q+ Kd7!= (but not 24…Kd6? 25 Qb7!+–).

Now the time has come to clarify why, after **1…g5!!**, 2 Kd5! is considered to be White's strongest move. The point is that, as shown by the previous analysis, Black can only save himself with 2…g4!, since on **2 Kc5**, he can play not only 2…g4, but also **2…gh 3 gh Ke5! 4 Ra8** (4 f4+ K×f4 5 R×f7+ Kg4 6 a7 K×h4=) **4…Kf4 5 Kb6 Rb2+ 6 Ka7**.

9-171



B

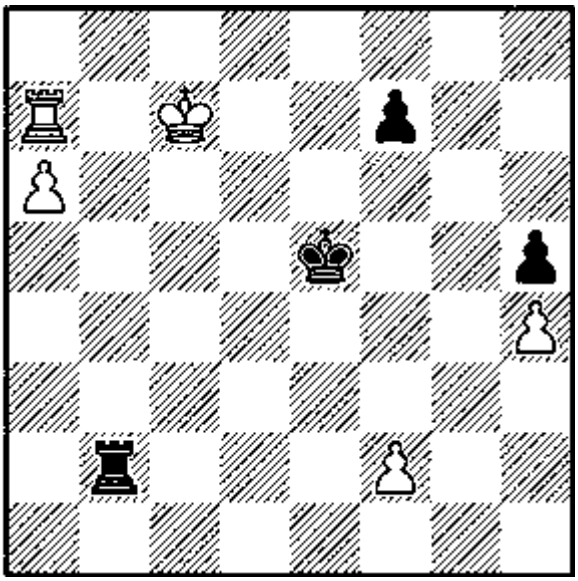
Now, wrong is 6…Kg4? in view of 7 Rb8 R:f2 8 Rb4+ Kg3 9 Kb6! Ra2 – and we have again reached the position in diagram 9-163 with the pawn on f7. Let me remind you that 10 Rb5? leads to a draw, but 10 Kb5! wins.

Steckner showed the simplest way to save the ending: **6…f5 7 Rg8!?** (7 Rb8 R×f2 8 Rb4+ Kg3 9 Kb7 Ra2=) **7…Kf3** 8 Rg5 f4 9 R×h5 K×f2= or 8 Rb8 R×f2 9 Rb5 Re2! (but not 9…Kg4? 10 Kb6+–) 10 Kb6 (10 R×f5+ Kg4=) 10…Re6+ 11 Ka5 Re7=.

I had considered 7…R×f2 a mistake (or 6…R×f2 7 Rg8 f5) in view of 8 Ka8! (8 Rg5 Rh2 9 R×h5 Kg4= or 9 Kb7 Rb2+ 10 Ka8 Ke4 11 R×h5 f4 12 Rh8 f3 13 Rf8 f2 14 h5 Ke3 15 h6 Rb1 16 h7 Rh1= is not dangerous). I had further analyzed 8…Rb2 9 a7 Ke3 10 Rb8 Ra2 11 Re8+! and 8…Ke5 9 Rh8!, without finding any way for Black to draw. Pogosyan improved the defense with 8…Ke3! 9 a7 f4 10 Kb7 (10 Re8+ Kd3) 10…Ra2 11 Re8+ Kd3 12 Re5 f3 13 R×h5 f2 14 Rf5 Rb2+ 15 Kc6 Ra2 16 R×f2 R×a7=, and White will inevitably lose the last pawn.

Besides 4 Ra8, Black must also reckon with 4 Kb6 Rb2+ 5 Kc7.

9-172



B?

In the variation 5…Rc2+? 6 Kd8! R×f2 7 Re7+ Kf6 8 Rc7 Ra2 9 a7 Kf5 10 Kc8 Kg4 11 Rc4+ Kg3 12 Kb7, he does not manage to save himself: 12…Rb2+ 13 Kc6 Ra2 14 Kb6 f5 15 Rc8!+– or 12…f5 13 Rc6! R×a7+ 14 K×a7 K×h4 15 Kb6+–.

5…Ra2! 6 Kb8 is necessary, and now the most precise is 6…f6! 7 Kb7 (7 Re7+ Kd6) 7…R×f2 8 Ra8 Rb2+ 9 Ka7 Kd6! 10 Rh8 (or 10 Rb8 Re2 11 Rf8 Kc7 12 Rf7+ Kc6 13 R×f6+ Kc7 14 Rf7+ Kc6 15 Rh7 Re5(e6) – White cannot make any progress) 10…Kc6 11 R×h5 Re2 12 Rh7 f5 13 h5 f4 14 Rh6+ Kc7 15 Rf6 Re7!= – the pawn capture will allow his opponent to force perpetual check. And the erroneous 6…f5? is refuted by 7 Re7+ Kf6 (7…Kd6 8 Rh7+–; 7…Kf4 8 a7+–) 8 Rh7! Kg6 9 a7! K×h7 10 a8Q R×a8+ 11 K×a8, and the pawn ending is lost (11…f4 12 f3!+–).

Let us return once more to the starting position of diagram 9-158 so that we may evaluate how Black should defend if it is his move. It turns out that in this case, Black can also only generate counterplay with the move g6-g5!.

Grandmaster Rustam Dautov has demonstrated the safest line. Before playing g6-g5, it makes sense to begin to limit the mobility of the white king.

1…Ra4! 2 Kd3

2 f4 Ke6! 3 Kd3 f6 4 Kc3 Kf5 5 Kb3 Ra1 6 Kb4 Kg4= is not dangerous. On 2 Ra8, the simplest reply is 2…Kf5!.

2…g5!

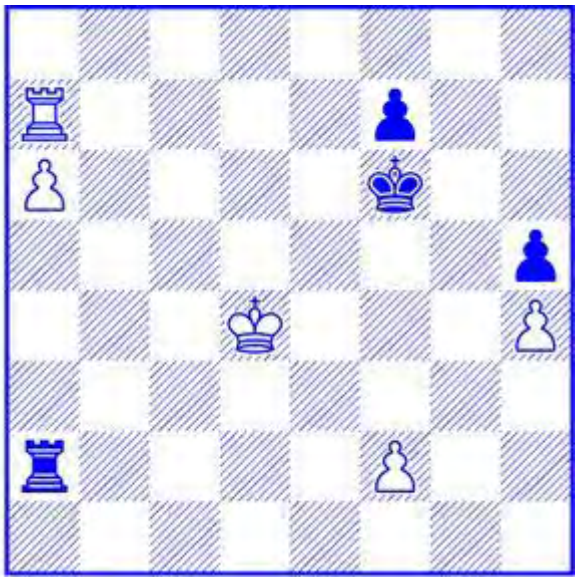
9-173

The exchange of the g5-pawn leads to roughly the same drawn position we examined in the variation 1 Kd4! g5!! 2 hg+ K×g5. In case of 3 Kc3 gh 4.gh, the pawn may be captured with impunity: 4…R×h4 5 Rb7 (5 Kb3 Rh1) 5…Ra4 6 a7 h4=.

The immediate **1…g5!** is also possible, after which White replies **2 Kd4!**. Black can then make use of the defensive method analyzed by Pogosyan: 2…g4!?.

The exchange **2…gh 3 gh** is also not bad.

9-174



But now it is important to resist the temptation to win one of the pawns:

3…R×f2? 4 Rc7 Ra2 5 a7 Kf5 6 Kc5 (but not 6 R×f7+? Kg4=) 6…Kg4 7 Kb5 (7 Kb4!? f5 8 Kb3) 7…Rb2+ 8 Kc4 Ra2 9 Kb3+–;

3…Ra4+? 4 Kc5 R×h4 5 Rb7 Ra4 6 a7 Kg5 (6…h4 7 Kb5 Ra1 8 Rb6+ and 9 Ra6+–; 6…Ra1 7 Kb6+–) 7 Rb5!+–.

It is best to follow the recommendation of Dautov and Anand, **3…Ke6! 4 Kc5 Ke5!**, leading to

the previously busted drawn line 1 Kd4! g5!! 2 Kc5?! gh 3 gh Ke5!.

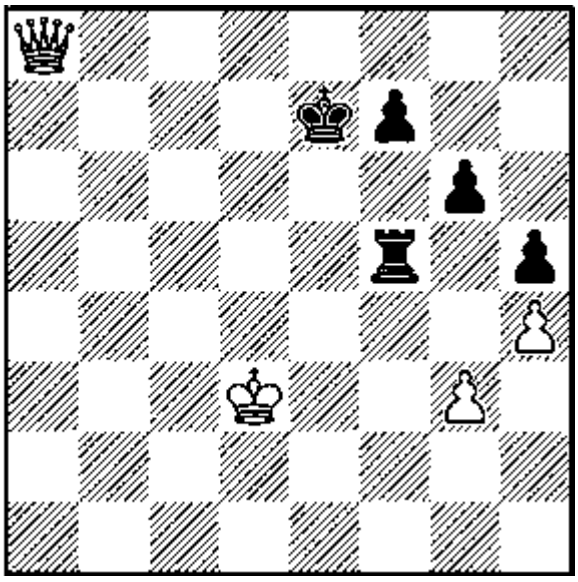
3…Ra5 4 Kc4 Ke5 5 Kb4 Ra2 is also possible. But here, in addition to 6 Kb5, leading to one of the lines examined above, the sharp 6 f4+!? must also be reckoned with. The capture of the pawn loses; necessary is 6…Ke6!. A very careful defense is required of Black. In the previous edition of the *Endgame Manual*, I examined the ensuing complications, but here I will refrain from this.

Now we have to determine if the other defensive plans fail.

I started the examination with 1…Ke5, and quickly found the line 2 Kd3! R×f2 3 Re7+! (the immediate 3 Rc7 is also worth consideration) 3…Kf6 (the pawn sacrifice 3…Kd6 4 a7 Ra2 5 R×f7 does not help, for example, 5…Kd5 6 Rd7+ Kc6 7 Rg7 Kd5 8 R×g6 R×a7 9 Ke3, etc.) 4 a7 Ra2 5 Rc7 Kf5 6 Kc4!, and we have arrived at the position in diagram 9-159, in which Steckner showed a win for White.

And what would have happened had Black chosen 4…K×e7 5 a8Q Rf5, hoping to maintain a fortress with rook against queen?

9-175



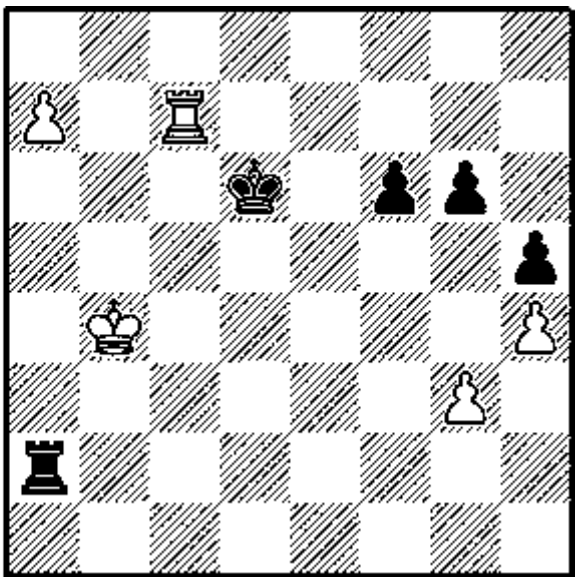
W

Look in Chapter 13 – there you will find a similar position that occurred in the game Dorfman-Beliavsky (diagram 13-38) and which shows that Black (or in that game, White) was quite correct to expect a draw, except that his king had to be on g7. With the king stuck in the center, however, he loses.

Let's examine a characteristic and quite important variation. Steckner uncovered it, while I have added a few explanations and touched some things up.

1…Ke5 2 Kd3 Kd5 (instead of 2…R×f2) **3 Kc3 R×f2 4 Rc7 Ra2 5 a7 f6 6 Kb4 Kd6**

9-176



W?

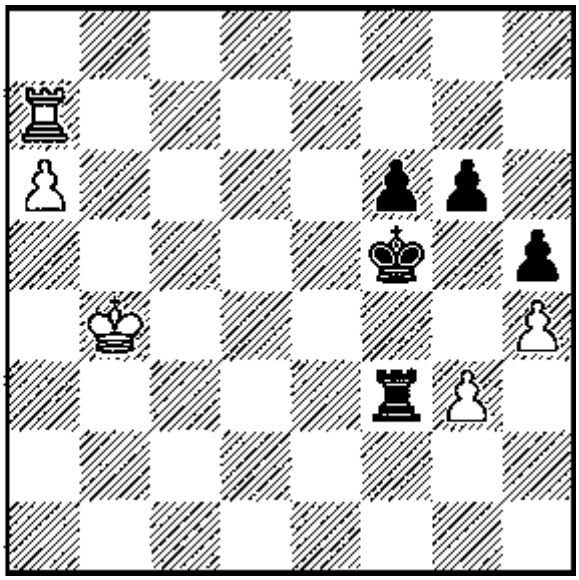
(a) White only gets a draw after 7 Rf7 Ke6 8 Rg7? (8 Rc7) 8…Kf5 9 Kb5 g5 (Black could transpose the last two moves) 10 Kb6 Kg4. Now 11 hg fg 12 Kb7 h4 (12…Rb2+!?) 13 gh K×h4 14 Rg6 R×a7+ 15 K×a7 g4 16 Kb6 Kg3! 17 Kc5 Kf3= is harmless. If 11 Kb7, the immediate capture on g3 loses – first, Black must drive back the white king: 11…Rb2+! 12 Kc8 Ra2 13 Kb8; only now can he play 13…K×g3 14 hg fg 15 R×g5+ Kh4=. The most dangerous try is 11 Rg8!?, after which 11…K×g3?? is bad: 12 hg fg 13 R×g5+ and 14 Ra5, while 11…Rb2+? 12 Kc5 Ra2 13 a8Q R×a8 14 R×a8 K×g3 15 Kd4! K×h4 16 Ke3(e4) leads to a position in which the rook wins against the three pawns. Black can secure the draw by means of the waiting move 11…Ra1!, for example, 12 Kb7 Rb1+ 13 Kc6 Ra1 14 a8Q R×a8 15 R×a8 K×g3 16 Kd5 gh=.

(b) The strongest line is **7 Rg7! Kc6** (after 7…Ke6 Black has a tempo less in comparison with the previous variation, and loses after 8 Kb5 Kf5 9 Kb6 g5 10 Kb7) **8 Rf7!** (but not 8 R×g6? R×a7 9 R×f6+ Kd5 10 Rf5+ Ke4 11 R×h5 Rg7=) **8…f5 9 Rg7 Kb6 10 Kc4**, when White should win.

There is one more defensive try: **1…Ke6 2 Kd4! f6** (we already know the consequences of 2…R×f2 3 Rc7 Ra2 4 a7+–).

Steckner demonstrated the win for White after 3 Kc5 Kf5 4 f3! Ra3 5 Kb4 R×f3.

9-177



W

This is a good time to draw your attention to a problem that must often be resolved: which is the best square for the rook – b7 or c7 (or, with the rook on a8 – b8 or c8)? Sometimes, the choice is made on purely tactical considerations. For example, with the king at c5 and the rook at a8, the move Rc8 would be impossible because of …Rc3+. And if, with the rook at a7, Black's rook were to occupy the eighth rank, then it would make sense to continue Rb7 and a6-a7, creating the threat of Rb8. But, ***it seems to me that it most often makes sense to retreat the rook to the c-file.*** In that case White's king on the b-file will not hinder the rook's mobility; and the threat of checks from the side by White's rook followed by the a-file interference becomes more realistic.

Naturally, I cannot prove my assertion; I can only provide illustrations.

Let's return to the last diagram. On 6 Rb7? Black, as noted by Mileto, saves himself by 6…Rf1! 7 a7 (7 Rb5+ Kg4 8 a7 Rb1+ 9 Kc5 Ra1 10 Kb6 R×a7) 7…Rb1+! 8 Kc5 Ra1 9 Rg7 g5 10 Kb6 Kg4 – we have already examined this drawn position (see variation (a) under diagram 9-176).

But if he plays 6 Rc7!, White wins: 6…Rf1 7 Rc4! Ra1 8 Kb5 g5 9 Ra4 Rb1+ 10 Ka5 Rb8 11 a7 Re8 12 Kb6 gh 13 gh. No better is 6…Re3 7 Rc4 Re7 (7…g5 8 a7 Re8 9 Kb5; 7…Re8 8 Kb5) 8 Kb5 g5 9 Ra4 gh 10 gh Ra7 11 Kb6+–.

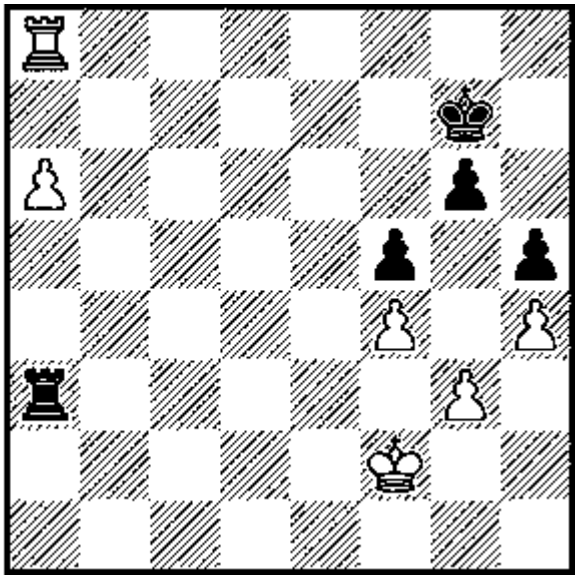
On the other hand, after 1…Ke6 2 Kd4 f6 White can win much more simply by continuing **3 Ra8! Kf5** (3…Kf7 4 Kc5 is hopeless) **4 f3** and 5 a7, transposing into the ending of the game Unzicker-Lundin, where White wins by marching his king to h6.

The conclusion is that, in similar positions, there is only one saving way for Black, one with g6-g5. Then either pawns are exchanged on h4 (which, it is true, is not always sufficient for a draw) or g5-g4 is played.

Our analysis of the Kantoroich/Steckner position acquaints us with the most important contemporary ideas for playing this endgame with the standard pawn structure f7-g6-h5 versus f2-g3-h4.

Now we proceed to an endgame with a different structure.

9-178



B

Here Black is faced with quite unpleasant problems: even after winning the g3-pawn he cannot activate his king, and creating a passed pawn is difficult, too. In addition, each initial move harms his position in some way, so he has to choose the least of the evils.

An attempt to force the matters loses: 1…Ra2+? 2 Ke3 Ra3+ 3 Kd4 R×g3 4 Rc8 Ra3 5 Rc7+ Kf6 6 a7 Ke6 7 Kc5 Ra1 8 Kb6 Rb1+ (8…Kd5 9 Rc5+ Ke4 10 Ra5) 9 Kc6 Ra1 10 Kb7 Kd5 11 a8Q R×a8 12 K×a8 Ke4 13 Rg7 K×f4 14 R×g6 Ke3 15 Rg5. Obviously, the king should be cut off along the third rank.

1…Kh7?! is also dubious, as after 2 Ra7+! Kh6 3 Ke2 R×g3 4 Rb7 Ra3 5 a7, the black king is poorly placed on h6.

But with correct defense, Black nevertheless manages to hold.

1…Kf7! 2 Ke2 (2 a7? Kg7=) **2…Kg7!**

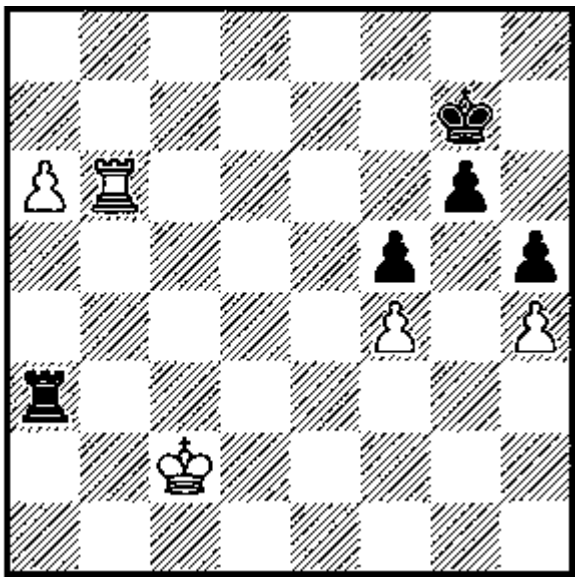
He has to lose a tempo, because 2…R×g3?? 3 a7 Ra3 4 Rh8 is bad.

3 Kd2 R×g3 4 Rb8 Ra3 5 Rb7+ Kf6 6 Rb6+

On 6 a7, the black king breaks loose: 6…Ke6 7 Kc2 Kd5, and if 8 Kb2 Ra6 9 Kb3, then 9…Kc5!, obstructing the path of the white king.

6…Kg7 7 Kc2

9-179



B?

7…g5!

A pawn sacrifice for creating a passed pawn, Black's only resource, but a sufficient one.

8 fg f4 9 Kd2 f3 10 Rb7+ Kg6 11 a7 Ra2+ 12 Ke1 Kf5 13 Rf7+ (13 Rg7 Re2+ 14 Kf1 Ra2=) **13…Kg6 14 R×f3 R×a7**=

If 15 Rf6+ Kg7 16 Rh6, then 16…Ra4 17 R×h5 Ra6!, forever imprisoning the white rook, is the simplest.

Tragicomedies

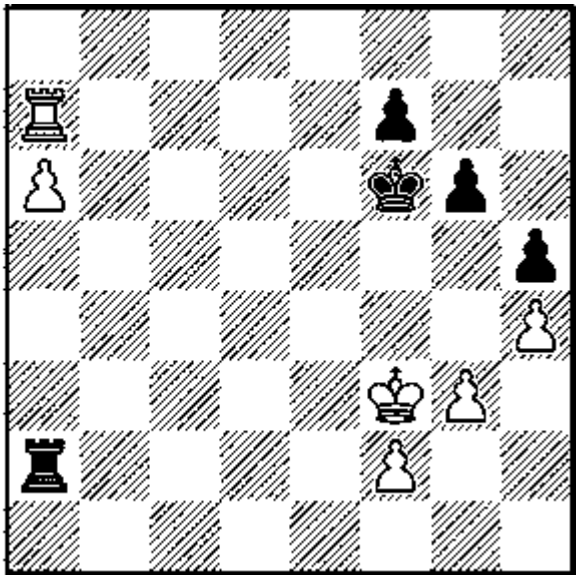
Let us now look at a few examples from current practice, and make use of our knowledge of theory to determine why strong grandmasters should suffer misfortune in drawn positions. We shall also learn some new ideas, which will enrich our theoretical understanding. In order to do this, however, we shall have to dive again and again into analytical debris.

Svidler – Akopian

European Cup, Kallithea 2002

9-180

B



This is the Kantorovich/Steckner position, with the white king slightly less well-placed. In some lines, obviously, Black will have an extra tempo, which enlarges the sphere of drawing possibilities at his disposal.

1…Ke5

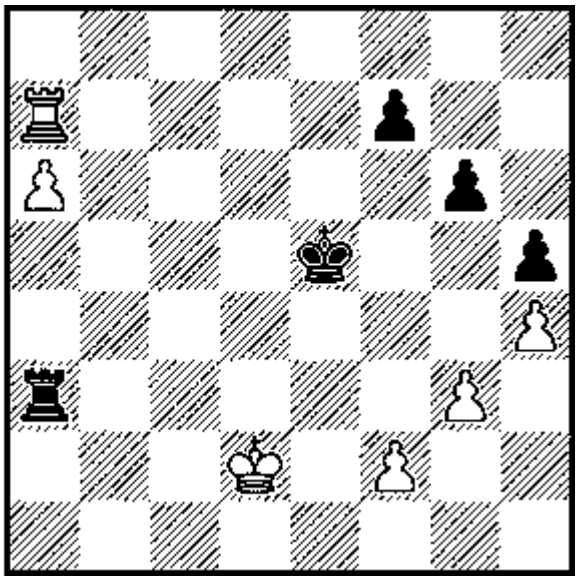
With the king at e3 this move would have lost; here, I believe it is not bad. He might also have played in "Dautov style": 1…Ra4!? 2 Ke3 g5, for example, 3 hg+ K×g5 4 Ra8 Kg4 5 a7 Ra3+ 6 Ke4 Ra4+ 7 Ke5(d5) Kf3=. The immediate 1…g5 would not have been any worse (the only move that could have been dangerous in reply would have been 2 Kd4! – even though this would not have been fatal, either – but White cannot play that here.)

2 Ke3 Ra3+

In *Informant* 85, Svidler recommends 2…f6 3 Kd3 R×f2 4 Rb7 Ra2 5 a7 Kf5 6 Kc4 Kg4 7 Kb3 Ra6 8 Rb4+ K×g3 9 Ra4 R×a7=. Our attentive readers may possibly recall the analysis of the Kantorovich/Steckner position (with White to move). In the line 4 Kc4!! f6 5 Kb4? Kg4 6 Kb3, we reached precisely the same position, and concluded that it would be won with Black's pawn at f7, but with the pawn at f6, it was drawn.

Nevertheless, 2…f6? is still a bad move in view of 3 Ra8! Ra3+ 4 Ke2, when Black will have a hard time avoiding transposition to the won position from the Unzicker-Lundin game (after f2-f3 and a6-a7) without substantial losses.

3 Kd2



3…Ra2+?

The fatal error! In this situation, the proper defensive plan involves the advance of the f-pawn. Here are a few sample variations: 3…f5! 4 Kc2 (4 f3 f4 5 g4 hg 6 fg Ra2+ and 7…f3=; 4 Ra8 Ke4 5 Re8+ Kd5!=) 4…f4 (but not 4…Ke4? in view of 5 Re7+!, when the king cannot enter f3 because of 6 Re3+) 5 Kb2 Ra5 6 Kb3 (6 Ra8 fg 7 fg Kf5 and 8…Kg4=) 6…fg (the suggestion of Dink Heckler is no worse: 6…f3!? 7 Kb4 Ra2 8 Ra8 R×f2 9 a7 Ra2 10 Re8+ Kd4=, or 7 Ra8 Kf5 8 a7 Kg4=) 7 fg Kf5 8 Kb4 (8 Rf7+ Ke6!=, but not 8…Kg4? 9 Rf4+ K×g3 10 Ra4 Rb5+ 11 Kc4 Rb8 12 a7 Ra8 13 Kd5+–) 8…Ra1 9 Kb5 Rb1+ 10 Kc6 Rc1+ 11 Kb6 Rb1+ 12 Kc7 Ra1 13 Ra8 Kg4 with a draw (Dvoretsky's analysis). It had seemed to me that 9…Kg4? (instead of 9…Rb1+) 10 Rc7 Rb1+ 11 Kc6 K×g3 12 a7 Ra1= was a direct equivalent, however Pogosyan improved White's play with the precise move 10 Rd7!+–, with the idea of defending the h4-pawn by Rd4.

Steckner noted that if White had played 3 Ke2, the aforementioned plan would not work: 3…f5? 4 Ra8! Ke4 5 f3+ Kd5 6 a7+–. And 3…f6? is also a mistake: 4 Ra8!; while after 3…Ra2+? 4 Kd3 R×f2, White wins as in the main line of the analysis of diagram 9-158 (5 Re7+ Kf6 6 a7 Ra2 7 Rc7 Kf5 8 Kc4!). The draw is reached by 3…Ke6! 4 Kd2 f6 5 Kc2 (here 5 Ra8 Kf5, is useless: White does not have f2-f3, and if he cannot play that, the black king gets to g4) 5…Kf5 6 Kb2 Ra5 7 f3 (7 Kb3 Kg4) 7…g5 8 Kb3 gh 9 gh Kf4 10 Kb4 Ra1 11 Kb5 Rb1+, etc.

4 Kc3

On 4 Kd3, we have the winning position mentioned above (diagram 9-158). But of course, moving the king to c3 is more natural.

4…R×f2 5 Rb7

The rook could have gone to c7 also. But here, the rook check, which we recommended with the white king on d3, is not that convincing: 5 Re7?!+ Kd6! (5…Kf6 6 Rc7+–) 6 a7 Rf3+! (Here is the problem: in that line, this check would not exist, as the king would be attacking the rook) 7 Kb4 (or anywhere else) 7…K×e7 8 a8Q R×g3. Since the rook is not lost, Black retains practical chances to save the game.

5…Ra2 6 a7 Kf6

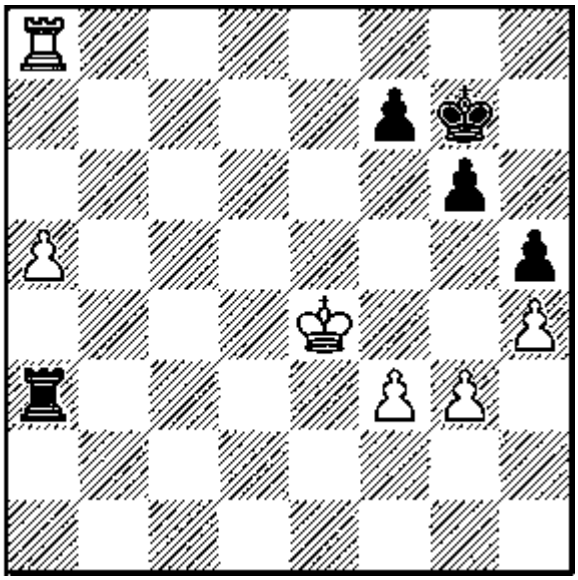
6…f6 was more stubborn. After 7 Kb4 Kd6 (both 7…Rb2+ 8 Kc5 R×b7 9 a8Q, and 7…Kf5 8 Rb5+ are hopeless), we reach the situation we know from diagram 9-176. Let me remind you of the fine win found by Steckner: 8 Rg7! Kc6 (8…Ke6 9 Kb5 Kf5 10 Kb6 g5 11 Kb7+–) 9 Rf7! f5 10 Rg7 Kb6 11 Kc4.

7 Kc4 Ra1 8 Kb5 Rb1+ 9 Kc6 Rc1+ 10 Kb6 Rb1+ 11 Kc7 Ra1 12 Kb8 Kf5 13 Rb4 Black resigned.

Lerner – Dorfman

USSR ch(1), Tashkent 1980

9-182



B?

1…Ra4+?

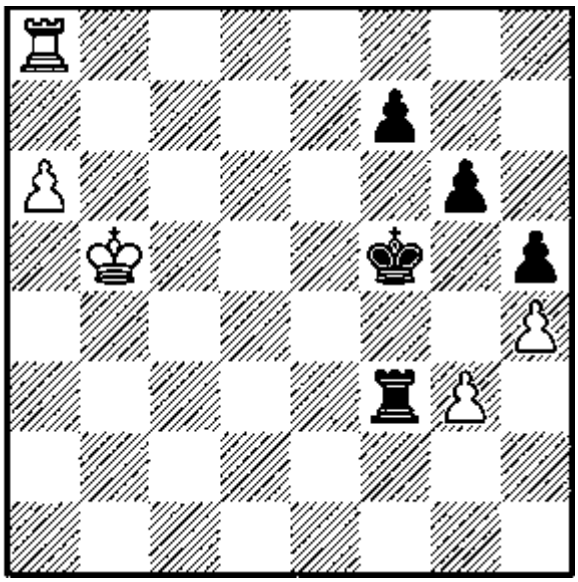
The rook was placed ideally (targeting the white pawns), but the king could and should have been activated. After 1…Kf6! 2 a6 (2 Ra6+ Kg7 3 Kd5 R:f3 is harmless) 2…Ke6 3 Kd4 Kf5!, Black is saved. For example, 4 Kc4 R×f3 5 Rd8 (5 Kb4 Rf1 6 Rc8 Rb1+) 5…Ra3 6 Kb5 Kg4 7 Rd4+ K×g3 8 Ra4 Rb3+ 9 Kc6 Rb8 10 a7 Ra8 11 Kb7 R×a7+ (11…Re8) 12 K×a7 f6 13 Kb6 g5=.

2 Kd5 Ra3 3 a6 R×f3

Now the black king is cut off along the sixth rank. However, 3…Kf6 did not offer real saving chances either: 4 Kc6 (Vladimir Vulfson recommended 4 Kc5!?, having in mind, on 4…Kf5, to drive the rook from the third rank with the move 5 Kb4, and only after 5…Ra1 to play 6 Kb5) 4…R×f3 5 Rd8! (the most precise) 5…Ra3 6 Kb5 (threatening 7 Rd4) 6…Ke5 7 Rd7 f6 8 a7 (Vulfson) – it is not clear what can be done against the threat of 9 Rc7 followed by the interference maneuver 10 Rc5+, 11 Rc4(c6)+ and 12 Ra4(a6). Less precise is 5 Rb8, and while it does not let the win slip, it is important to note that after 5…Ra3, the only reply is 6 Kb6! (but not 6 Rb6? Kf5 7 Kb7 Kg4 8 a7 R×a7+ 9 K×a7 K×g3 10 Rb4 f6 and 11…g5=).

Let's try 4…Kf5 (instead of 4…R×f3) 5 Kb5 R×f3.

9-183



W

Steckner suggested the following way to achieve the goal: 6 Rf8 Rb3+ (other replies are no better: 6…Ra3 7 R×f7+ Kg4 8 Rf4+ K×g3 9 Ra4+– or 6…Kg4 7 a7 Ra3 8 a8Q R×a8 9 R×a8 K×g3 10 Ra4 f6 11 Kc4! K×h4 12 Kd3+, and the rook can deal with the three pawns) 7 Ka4 Rb1 8 R×f7+ Kg4 9 Rf4+ K×g3 10 Rb4 Re1 11 Rb3+! K×h4 12 a7 Re8 13 Rb8 Re1 14 Kb3 (14 Rb4+ Kg5 15 Ka5 Re8 16 Rb8 Ra1 17 a8Q+– is the same) 14…Re3+ (14…Ra1 15 Rb4+ and 16 Ra4+–) 15 Kc2 Ra3 16 a8Q R×a8 17 R×a8 Kg3 18 Rg8 h4 19 R×g6+ Kf2 20 Rh6! Kg3 21 Kd2+–.

6 Rc8 Rb3+ 7 Ka4 Rb1 8 Rc3 Rb8 is no less strong, and now, not 9 Ka5? Kg4! 10 a7 Re8! 11

Kb6 f6 12 Kb7 g5 13 Rc8 Re7+ with a draw (Dvoretsky), but 9 Rc4! f6 10 Ka5 g5 11 a7 Re8 12 Kb6+– (Pogosyan).

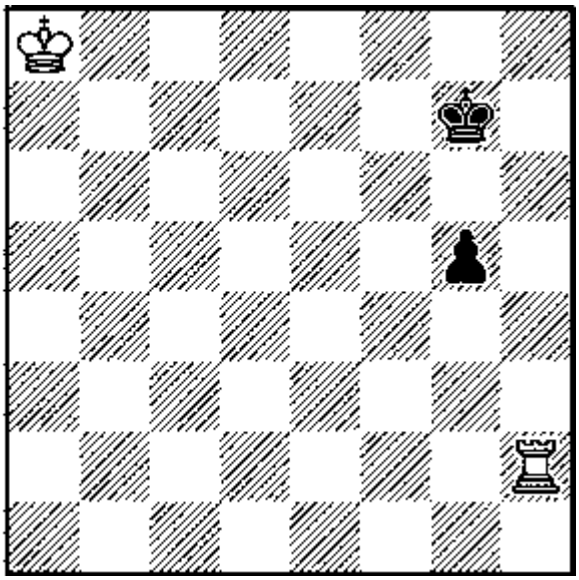
4 Rb8 Ra3 5 Rb6 R×g3 6 Kc6 Ra3 7 Kb7 g5

Or 7…f6 8 a7 R×a7+ 9 K×a7 g5 10 Rb4!? Kg6 11 Kb6 Kf5 (11…gh 12 R×h4 Kg5 13 Rh1 h4 14 Kc5 Kg4 15 Kd4 h3 16 Ke3 Kg3 17 Rg1+ – Anikaev) 12 Kc5 g4 13 Kd4 (13 Rb1 g3 14 Rf1+ Kg4 15 R×f6 K×h4 16 Kd4 Kh3 17 Ke3+–) 13…Kf4 14 Kd3+.

8 hg h4 9 a7 h3 10 a8Q (10 Ra6? h2) 10…R×a8 11 K×a8 h2 12 Rh6 f6 13 R×h2 fg

9-184

W?



14 Rf2!!

Excellent! The rook prevents the shouldering maneuver that was possible after 14 Kb7? Kf6 15 Kc6 Ke5!=. For the sake of restricting the enemy king, White does not begrudge a vital tempo.

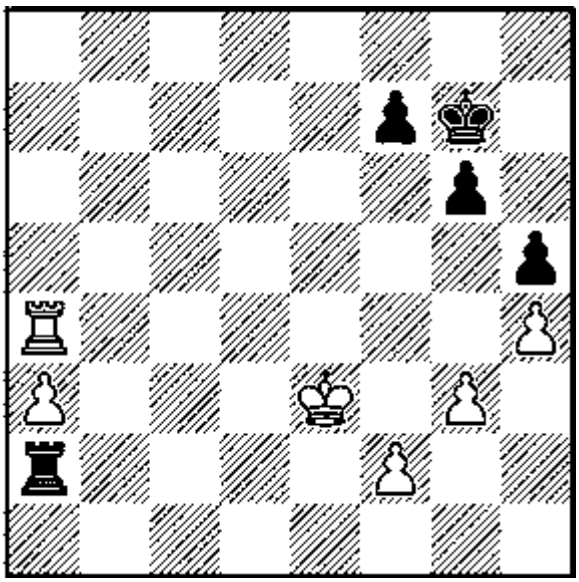
14…Kg6 15 Kb7 g4 16 Kc6 Kg5 17 Kd5 g3 18 Rf8! Kg4 19 Ke4 Black resigned.

Akopian – Kir. Georgiev

Las Vegas wch 1999

9-185

B



1…Ra1?!

As in the previous example, Black does not care about the activation of his king. Perhaps Georgiev rejected 1…Kf6! in view of 2 Rf4+ Ke6 3 a4, but he could play 3…f6! then, followed by …g6-g5, driving the rook back from its comfortable position on f4 where it has been protecting all the white pawns.

2 Ra6! Ra2 3 a4 Ra3+?

The same pernicious strategy that was fatal for Dorfman. In our current case, the a-pawn is still

two steps away from a6, but White does not need extra time for bringing his rook from the eighth rank to the sixth.

Black should have carried out the useful pawn advance 3…f6! followed by 4…g5; then a draw could have been achieved relatively easily.

4 Kd4 f6?!

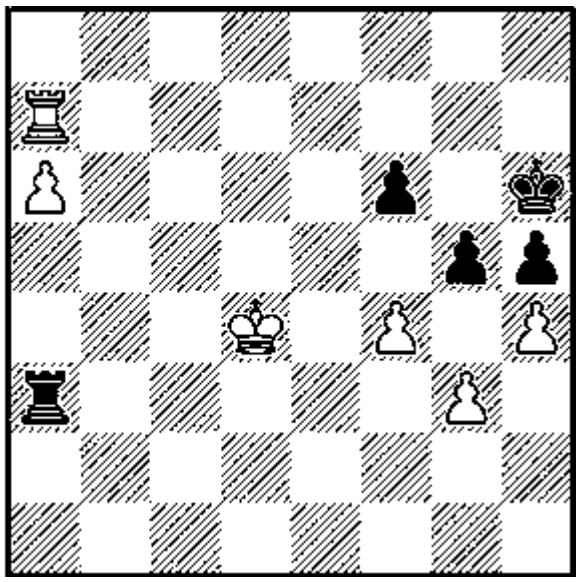
In this case, the "?!" symbol expresses my perplexity. Black's operations are devoid of logic. He arrives at the aforementioned plan after all, but why has he driven the white king nearer to the queenside and why has he released the pressure on the f2-pawn? The rook check could have been followed up by 4…Rf3 or 4…Ra2.

The position after 4…Ra2 5 a5 arose (with reversed colors) in the game Krakops-Dautov, Batumi ech tt 1999.

Krakops refused to capture the pawn, in favor of 5…f6, to which the simplest answer would have been 6 Ra7+ Kh6 7 a6 g5 8 Ra8 gh 9 gh Kg6 10 Kc5. A similar situation might have arisen in the game – as analyzed in the note to Black's 8th move. White should win, but not without difficulties

Rustam Dautov preferred 6 f4 Ra3 7 Ra7+ Kh6 8 a6 g5.

9-186



W?

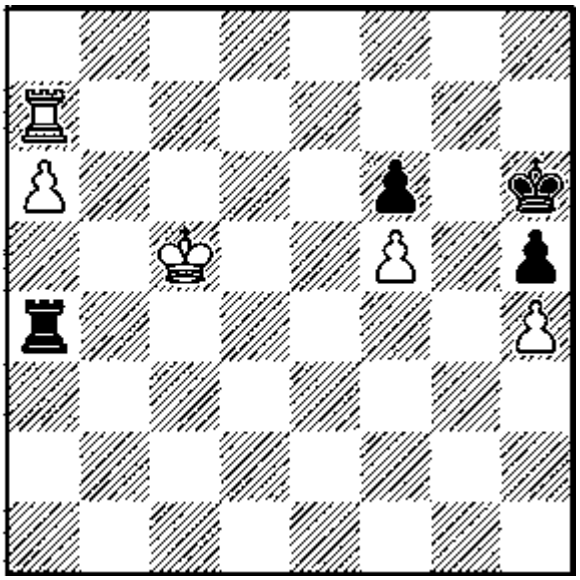
White would win by 9 Ra8! gh 10 gh Kg6 11 Kc5 Kf5 12 Kb6 Rb3+ 13 Ka7 K×f4 14 Rb8 Ra3 15 Rb5! Kg4 (or 15…f5) 16 Kb6 △ 17 Ra5 – again, I refer any who have doubts to the note to Black's 8th move.

But the tempting 9.f5? (which was erroneously awarded an exclamation mark in the first edition) immediately presented his opponent with two ways to save the game, neither of which he used.

(a) 9…R×g3 10 Ra8 Ra3 11 a7, and now instead of the losing 11…Kg7? 12 hg fg 13 f6+ Kf7 14 Rh8, the king must be driven from the kingside with lateral checks: 11…Ra4+! 12 Kd5 Ra5+!, so that after 13 Kc4 (no better is 13 Kc6 gh! or 13 Ke6 Ra6+ 14.Ke7 gh) to play 13…gh! 14 Rh8+ Kg5 15 a8Q R×a8 16 R×a8 h3!= (Pogosyan).

(b) 9…gh 10 gh Ra4+ 11 Kc5

9-187



B?

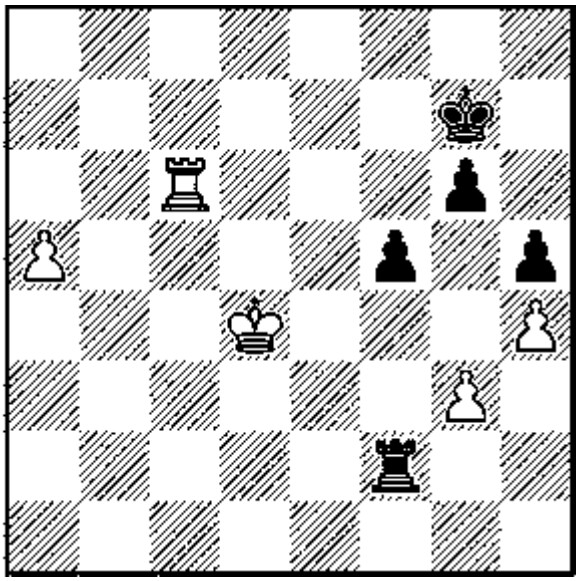
11…R×h4? (as played in the game) 12 Ra8 Ra4 13 a7 Kg5 (13…Kg7 14 Kb6 Rb4+ 15 Ka5) 14 Rg8+ K×f5 15 a8Q R×a8 16 R×a8 h4 17 Kd4 Kf4 18 Rh8 Kg3 19 Ke3 f5 20 Rg8+ Kh2, and Black resigned.

On his 11th move, Black should have inserted a check: 11…Rc4+!. The rook is taboo because of stalemate. After 12 Kd6, the “mad rook” theme does not work any more (the king easily escapes harassment), but then, taking the pawn by 12…R×h4 is stronger. I examined the variation 13 Ke6 Rb4 14 K×f6 Rb6+ 15 Ke5 Rb5+ 16 Kf4 Rb4+ 17 Ke3 Rb3+ 18 Kd2 Rb2+ 19 Kc3 Ra2 20 Ra8 Kg7 21 a7 h4 22 f6+, winning, but Thomas Stark proposed a simple improvement for the defense: 13…Ra4! 14 K×f6 h4 15 Ra8 Kh7 16 Kg5 h3=.

Let us analyze the critical continuation 5…R×f2 6 Rc6!

In the summer of 2003, Artur Yusupov was conducting a class with some young German players. When he demonstrated this game, one of his students, David Baramidze, suggested an interesting counter-plan: 6…f5!?.

9-188



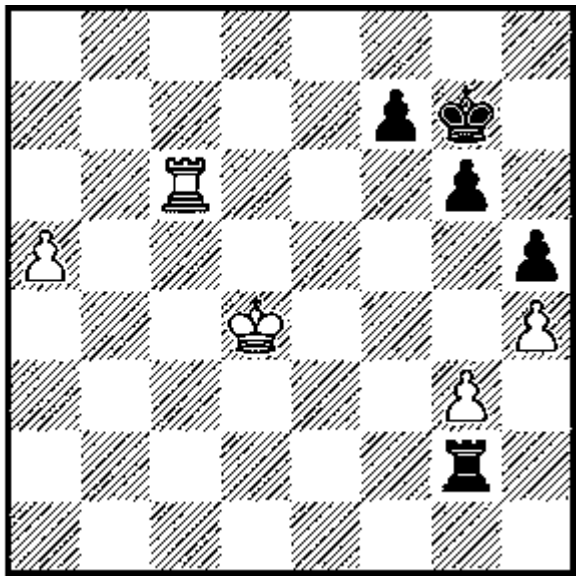
W

Black hurries to force matters on the kingside. 7 Ke5 Rf3 or 7 Kc5 f4 8 gf R×f4 followed by 9…R×h4 would not be dangerous for Black, who has time to give up his rook for the passed pawn, with a draw.

Therefore White plays 7 a6 f4 8 a7 Ra2 9 Rc7+ Kf6 10 gf Kf5, and now, as Pogosyan has noted, the most precise is 11 Kc4! (I had examined 11 Kc5, which, however, is also sufficient to win) 11…Kg4 (11…K×f4 12 Kb3, intending 13 Rc4+ and 14 Ra4) 12 f5! gf 13 Kb3 Ra6 14 Rc4+ f4 15 Ra4 R×a7 16 R×a7 K×h4 17 Kc3+–, or 12…K×f5 13 Kb4 Kg4 (13…Kf6 14 Kb5+–) 14 Rc4+ Kg3 15 Rc3+ K×h4 16 Ra3+–.

The main line is definitely 6…Rg2:

9-189

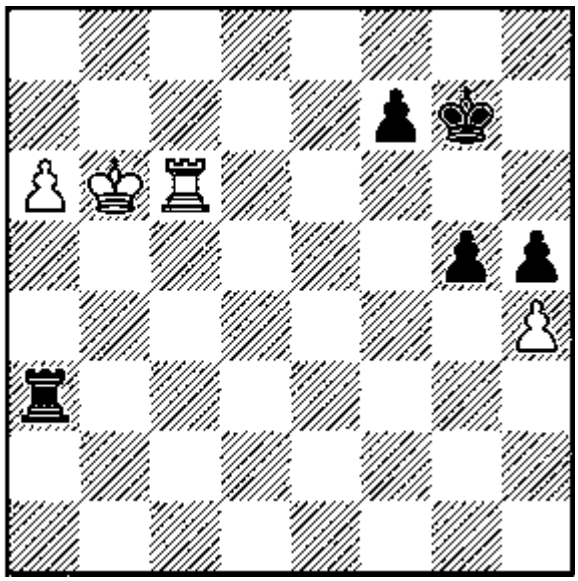


W

After 7 a6 R×g3 8 Kc5 Black's mission of achieving a draw is still very far from simple. For example, 8…f6 9 a7 Ra3 10 Kb6 g5 11 Rc8! R×a7 12 K×a7 Kg6 13 Kb6 Kf5 14 Kc5 gh 15 Kd4 Kf4 16 Rc3! (16 Kd3? h3 17 Ke2 h2 18 Rc1 Kg3=; 16 Rh8? h3 17 R×h5 Kg3=) 16…f5 17 Ra3⊙ Kg4 18 Ke3 Kg3 19 Ke2+ Kg2 20 Ra8+–.

I suppose that Black still can save the game by playing either 8…g5! or 8…Ra3 9 Kb6 g5! with the following eventual consequences:

9-190



W

(a) 10 Rc5 gh 11 R×h5 (11 a7 R×a7 12 K×a7 Kg6 13 Kb6 h3) 11…h3 12 a7 Ra1! 13 R×h3 (13 Ra5 Rb1+ 14 Kc7 h2 15 a8Q h1Q) 13…Rb1+ 14 Kc7 Rc1+ 15 Kb7 Rb1+ 16 Ka8 f5 17 Rc3 Kf6 18 Rc8 Ke5 19 Rb8 Ra1=

(b) 10 hg h4 11 a7 h3 12 Rc3! (12 Rh6 Rb3+ 13 Kc7 Rc3+ 14 Kb7 Rb3+ 15 Rb6 h2) 12…R×c3! (both 12…Ra1 13 R×h3 Rb1+ 14 Kc7 Ra1 15 Kb7 Rb1+ 16 Ka8 Kg6 17 Rh8 K×g5 18 Rb8 Ra1 19 Kb7 f5 20 a8Q R×a8 21 R×a8 f4 22 Kc6 and 12…h2 13 R×a3 h1Q 14 a8Q are losing; in the last line, the white king finds asylum on the kingside, on h2) 13 a8Q Rg3=. White can eliminate the h-pawn only at the cost of his g5-pawn; thereafter the black rook will be placed on g6 with an easy draw (see Chapter 13).

For some time I believed that these complex variations showed that the position was drawn after the capture of the f2-pawn. Rustem Dautov refuted my evaluation, discovering the idea of transferring the rook to the fifth rank, preventing the move g6-g5.

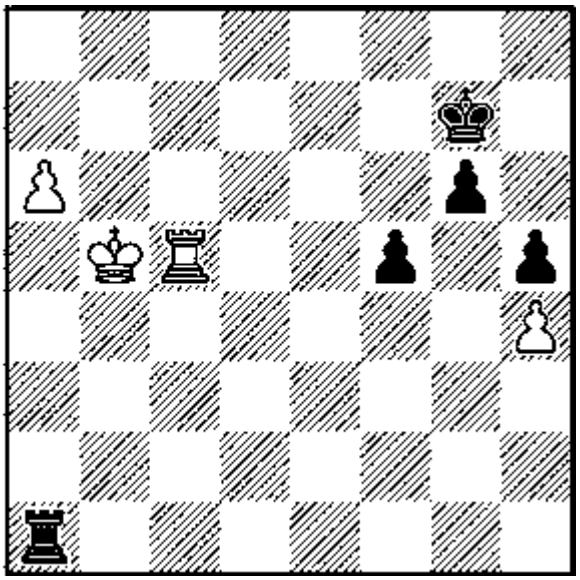
The grandmaster formulated his idea as follows: 7 Rc3 Ra2 8 Rc5 Ra3 9 Kc4 R×g3 10 a6 Ra3 11 Kb5. Later, however, Pogosyan, in a more sophisticated analysis, showed that by continuing

9…f5! (instead of 9…R×g3), Black is still able to save himself. He even suggested a more precise order of moves: 7 a6! R×g3 8 Rc3!! (instead of the continuation examined by us, 8 Kc5) 8…Rg4+ (8…Rg1 9 Ra3+–) 9 Kc5 Ra4 (9…R×h4 10 Ra3 Re4 11 a7 Re8 12 a8Q loses) 10 Kb5 Ra1 11 Rc5! (but not 11 Rc4 g5!), and Dautov's position has arisen, with the slight difference that the black rook has been transferred from a3 to a1.

Originally Rustem had examined only 11…f6 12 Kb6 Kh6 13 Ra5 Rb3+ 14 Kc7 Rc3+ 15 Kd7 Rd3+ 16 Ke7 Re3+ 17 Kf7+–. But the move 11…f5! gives White far more complex problems.

9-191

W?



Nothing comes of 12 Kb6? f4 13 a7 f3=. In the line 12 Rc4?! g5 13 Ra4 Rb1+ 14 Kc6, Black does not play 14…Rb8? 15 a7 Ra8 16 Kb7+–, but 14…Rc1+! (driving the king away from the b7-square) 15 Kd7 Rd1+ 16 Ke6 Rd8 17 a7 Ra8 18 K×f5 gh=.

Dautov found a clever in-between check: 12 Rc7+!! Kh6, and only now 13 Rc4 g5 14 Ra4 Rb1+ 15 Kc6. Here 15…Rc1+ 16 Kd7 is useless because the king finds asylum from the checks on f7. If 15…Rb8 16 a7 Ra8, the move 17 Kb7?, which would win with Black's king at g7, now leads to a draw: 17…R×a7+ and 18…gh. But 17 Ra6! R×a7 (17…gh 18 Kb7+) 18 hg+ (or 18 R×a7 gh 19 Kd5+–) 18…K×g5 19 R×a7 h4 20 Kd5 Kf4 21 Kd4 h3 22 Rh7 Kg3 23 Ke3+– is decisive.

This extremely complicated analysis leads us to the conclusion that the attack on the f2-pawn does not save Black.

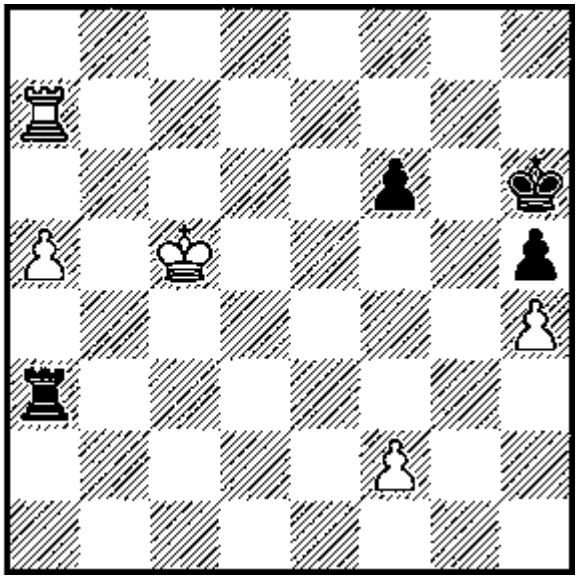
5 Ra7+ Kh6 6 a5 g5

6…Rf3 7 a6 R×f2 8 Rc7 Ra2 9 a7 g5 10 Kc5 is hopeless.

7 Kc5 gh 8 gh

9-192

B

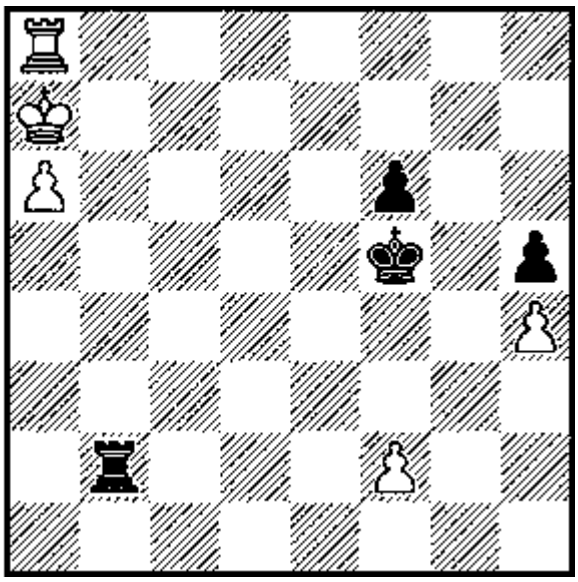


8…Ra4?

Another completely illogical move as it makes sense only in connection with a capture on h4, but Black cannot take this pawn. Both 8…Kg6 and 8…Ra2 would have been better. On the other hand, even with the tempo saved, Black probably still could not have saved the game. For example, 8…Kg6 9 a6 Ra2 (9…Kf5 10 Kb5 followed by Rc7) 10 Ra8 Kf5 11 Kb6 Rb2+ 12 Ka7.

9-193

B



We have again arrived at the situation discussed in the Kantorovich/Steckner analysis. On 12…R×f2 13 Rb8 Kg4 (13…Rf4 14 Rb5 Kg4 15 Kb6+–; 13…Re2 14 Rb4 Re7+ 15 Kb6 Re6+ 16 Ka5 Re7 17 Rb7 Re8 18 a7 Ra8 19 Ka6+–) 14 Rb4+ Kg3 15 Kb6 Ra2 (see diagram 9-163) White has two ways to win: 16 Kb5! and 16 Rb5!?. And after 12…Kf4, there is the position in diagram 9-171, but with an extra tempo for White: there the pawn had time to get to f5, and 13 Rb8 R×f2 led to a draw, but with the pawn on f6, 14 Rb4+ Kg3 15 Kb6 wins.

9 a6 Ra2

Black loses at once after 9…R×h4 10 Ra8 Ra4 11 a7 Kg7 12 Kb6 Rb4+ 13 Ka5+–.

10 Ra8 Kg6 11 Kb6 Rb2+ 12 Ka7 R×f2 13 Rb8 Rf4 14 Rb5 R×h4 15 Kb6 Re4 16 a7 Re8 17 Ra5 h4 18 a8Q R×a8 19 R×a8 Kg5 20 Kc5 h3 21 Rh8 Kg4 22 Kd4 Kg3 23 Ke3 Kg2 24 Ke2 h2 25 Rg8+ Kh3 26 Kf2 h1N+ 27 Kf3 Kh2 28 Rg2+ Kh3 29 Rg6 Kh2 30 R×f6 Kg1 31 Rg6+ Black resigned.

The two last examples prompt us to make the following useful conclusions:

Quick activation of the king is a high priority for the weaker side.

In a standard pawn structure, posting the rook on a6, with the idea of confining the black king to g7, is no less dangerous in a practical sense than a pawn advance to a6.

The defender has a good counter-plan at his disposal: …f7-f6 followed by …g6-g5.

A Knight's Pawn

If a passed pawn stands on the b-file, the king saves a tempo when heading towards it – and another tempo when returning after winning a rook for the pawn. Therefore the stronger side is almost always successful in practical endings. But a detailed postmortem analysis usually shows that the defense could have been improved and the defender's claims of a missed draw are not groundless.

Hollis – Flórián

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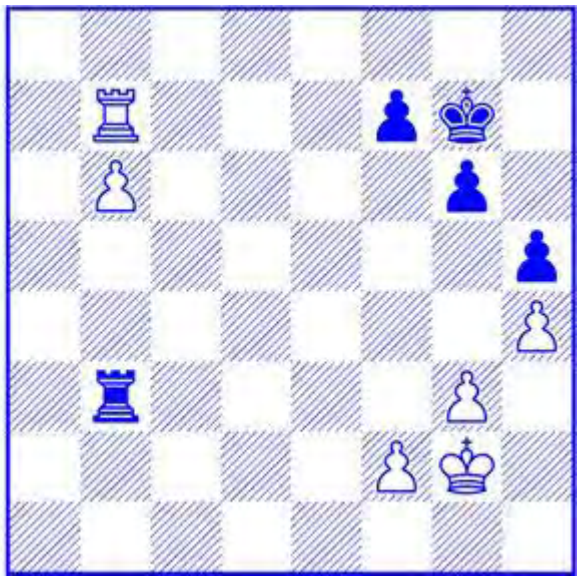
9-194



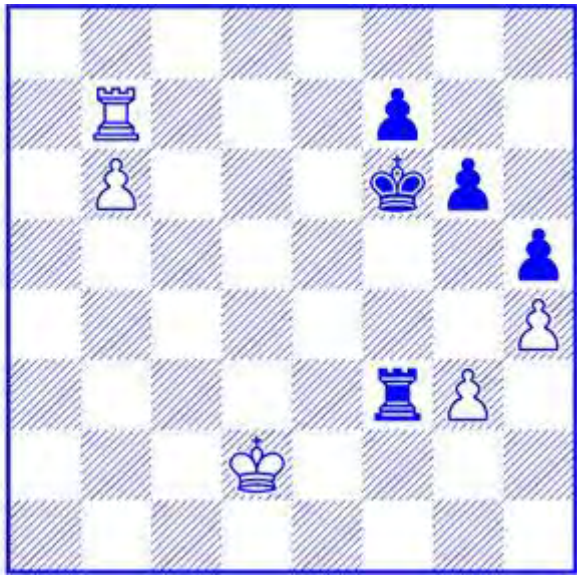
W

Deep analysis of this example will help us understand the basic patterns of endings with a knight's pawn. According to Adrian Hollis' comments, his victory was legitimate…

1 Kf1 Rb2 2 Ke1 Kf6 3 f3 Rb3 4 Kd2 R×f3?!

Although this capture looks natural, as no counterplay on the kingside may be generated without it, nevertheless, as will become clear later, this is the decisive mistake.

9-195



W?

(a) 5 Kc2?!

The threat is 6 R×f7+ K×f7 7 b7.

5…Re3!

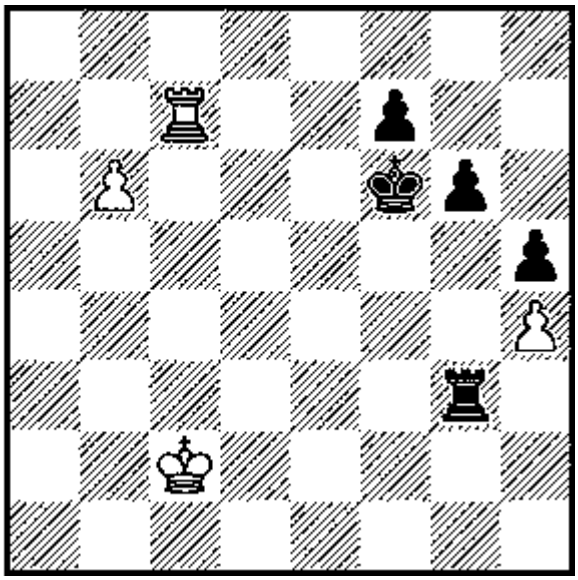
The only way to survive. After bringing the rook to the eighth rank, Black will not be afraid of any interference along the b-file, and his king can advance quickly. All other plans lead to a loss.

The game in question continued as follows: 5…Rf5? 6 Rc7 Rb5 7 b7 Ke6 8 Kc3 f6 9 Kc4 Rb1 10 Kc5 Kf5 11 Rd7! Rc1+ (11…Kg4 12 Rd4+ and 13 Rb4+–) 12 Kd6 Rb1 13 Kc7 Rc1+ 14 Kd8 Rb1 15 Kc8 Kg4 16 Rd6 g5 17 R×f6 gh 18 gh K×h4 19 Rg6! Kh3 20 Kc7. Black resigned in view of 20…R×b7+ (20…h4 21 Rb6) 21 K×b7 h4 22 Kc6 Kh2 23 Kd5 h3 24 Ke4 Kh1 25 Kf3+–.

The principled continuation 5…R×g3 does not help. The idea behind it is 6 R×f7+? K×f7 7 b7 Rg2+ 8 Kc3 Rg3+ 9 Kc4 Rg4+ 10 Kc5 Rf4! (10…R×h4 11 b8Q Re4 also deserves attention) 11 b8Q Rf5+ 12 Kd6 Kg7!, and White cannot breach the black fortress (Averbakh).

The move 6 Rc7!, suggested by Hollis and analyzed by Averbakh, is much stronger than the rook sacrifice.

9-196



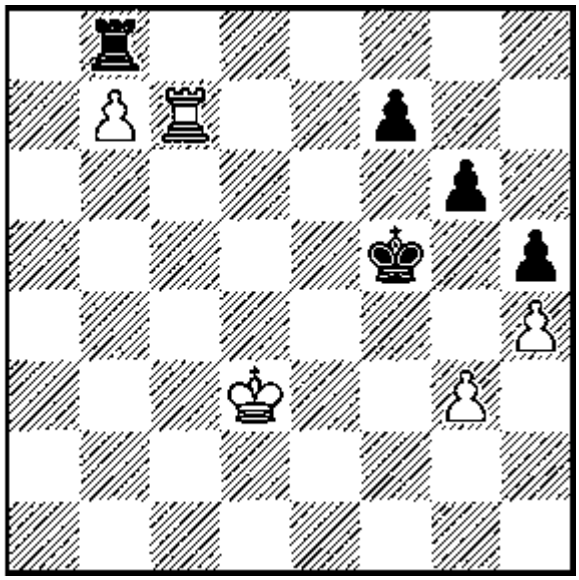
B

For example, 6…Rg2+ (6…Rg4 7 Kb3) 7 Kb3 Rg1 8 Kb2 Rg2+ 9 Rc2 Rg4 10 Rc3 R×h4 (10…Rg2+ 11 Ka3 Rg1 12 b7+–; 10…Rb4+ 11 Rb3+–) 11 Ka3! Re4 12 b7 Re8 13 Rc8 Re3+ 14 Kb2 Re2+ 15 Kc3 Re3+ 16 Kd2 Rb3 17 b8Q R×b8 18 R×b8 Kg5 19 Ke3 Kg4 20 Kf2+–.

Trying for an intermediary series of checks prior to the pawn capture – 5…Rf2+? 6 Kb3 Rf3+ – could have been justified in case of 7 Ka4 R×g3 8 Rc7 Rg1 9 Rc5(c4) Rb1!. However it is refuted by 7 Kc4! R×g3 8 Rc7 Rg1 9 Rc5!+– (Yusupov, Dvoretsky).

6 Rc7 Re8 7 b7 (7 Rc3 Rb8 8 Rb3 Ke6=) **7…Rb8 8 Kd3 Kf5!**

9-197



W

9 R×f7+

Or 9 Ke3 Kg4 10 Kf2 f6 11 Rc4+ Kf5! 12 Rb4 g5 13 Kf3 Ke5 14 Rb5+ Kd6 15 Ke4 (15 hg fg 16 R×g5 R×b7 17 R×h5 Ke6=) 15…Kc6 16 Rb1 gh 17.gh R×b7 18 R×b7 K×b7 19 Kf5 Kc7=.

9…Kg4 10 Rf4+ K×g3 11 Rb4 g5! 12 hg h4 13 g6 h3 14 g7 h2 15 Rb1 Kg2= (analysis by Averbakh).

(b) 5 Rc7! Rb3

6 Rc3 was threatened, while 5…R×g3 6 Kc2 leads by a transposition of moves to the variation 5 Kc2?! R×g3 6 Rc7 examined above, shown to be winning for White. On 5…Ke6 or 5…Ra3, the move 6 Rc3 is no longer dangerous, but the simple 6 b7 Rb3 7 Kc2, followed by bringing the king up, is sufficient for White to win.

6 b7 Kf5

No better is 6…Ke6 7 Kc2 Rb6 8 Kd3.

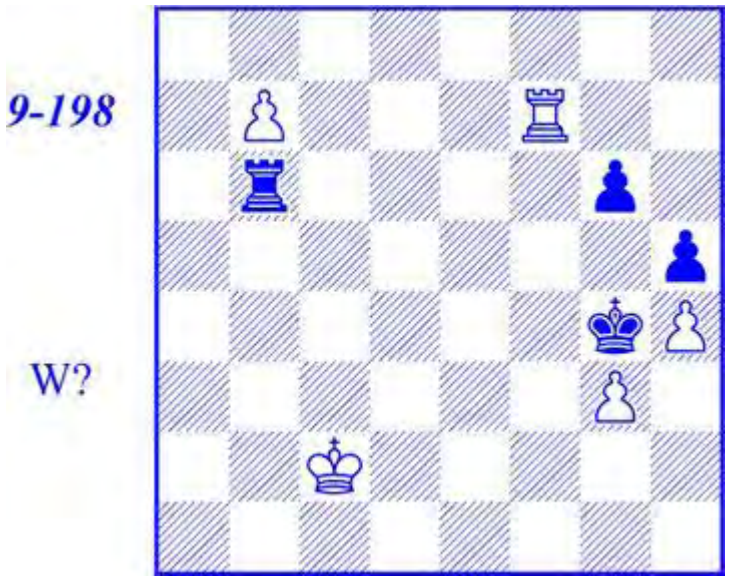
7 Kc2 Rb6

After 7…Rb5 8 Kc3 Kg4 (8…f6 9 Kc4) 9 Rc4+ K×g3 10 Rb4 R×b7 11 R×b7 K×h4 12 R×f7 (or 12 Kd3) the rook and king can easily cope with the pawns.

8 R×f7+

Weaker is 8 Kc3 f6! 9 Rc5+ Ke6=.

8…Kg4



Kantorovich had analyzed to this position, believing that White wins by 9 Rd7 K×g3 10 Rd3+ K×h4 11 Rb3. However, Black may decline the immediate capture of the pawn with 9…Kh3!. For example, 10 Kc3 K×g3! (now this is possible!) 11 Rd3+ K×h4 12 Rd4+ Kg3 13 Rb4 R×b7 14 R×b7 h4=. I therefore did not consider the move 5 Rc7 particularly dangerous for Black (my mainline was 5 Kc2), and the verdict of endgame theory on the sufficiency of the capture of the f3-pawn to draw seemed correct. This viewpoint was reflected in previous editions of my *Endgame Manual*.

In 2008, master Igor Yanvarev published analysis strengthening White's play. The Dutch analyst Wilburt Micawber had independently come to the same conclusion.

9 Rg7! (incidentally, this move is also strong after 9 Rd7 Kh3) **9…Kh3 10 Kc3**. And here it turns out that Black is defenseless.

10…Rb1

Not 10…K×g3 because of the rook deflection 10 R×g6+. If 10…Rb5, then 11 Kc4 Rb1 12 Kc5 (also not bad is 12 Rd7) 12…Rc1+ 13 Kd6 Rb1 14 Kc7 Rc1+ 15 Kd8 Rb1 16 Kc8 K×g3 17 R×g6+ K×h4 18 Kc7 R×b7 19 K×b7+–.

11 Rd7!

Now the idea behind the zwischenzug 9 Rg7! becomes clear. The black rook is now situated not on b6, as in my line, but on b1, and 11…K×g3 is no longer possible in view of the interference on b4 or b2 after 12 Rd3+!.

11…Rb6 12 Kc4 K×g3

No better is 10…Rb1 11 Kc5 K×g3 12 Rd3+ Kg2 (12…K×h4 13 Rd4+ and 14 Rb4) 13 Kc6 Rc1+ 14 Kd7 Rb1 15 Kc7 Rc1+ 16 Kb8 Rb1 17 Ra3(c3)+–.

13 Rd3+ K×h4 14 Rb3 R×b7 15 R×b7+–.

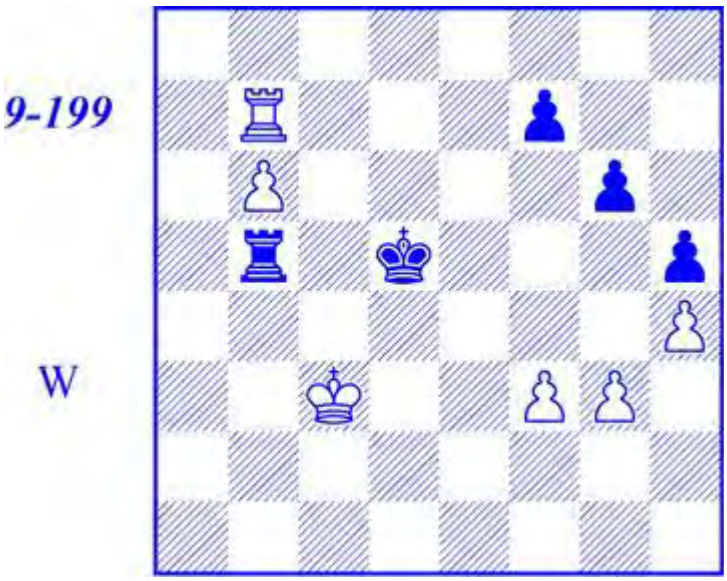
We come to the most interesting point. The fact the b-pawn is nearer the kingside in comparison with a rook's pawn has its sunny side for Black. He can abandon the idea of a race and apply another, somewhat surprising, strategy: his king is able to prevent the invasion of the enemy king

The remarkable defensive plan of creating a barrier against the opponent's king was suggested many years ago by Vadim Kantorovich. He did not subject his idea to analysis and was not even sure that it would be sufficient to draw.

I examined the position, focusing on the piece placement proposed by Kantorovich: with the rook on b7, the king remains on e6, and in reply to the move Rb8, removing the attack on the f7-pawn, Kd6 is played. In the ensuing complicated variations, Black, it seemed to me, has every right to look forward to saving himself.

In 2011, Vardan Pogosyan made some significant theoretical corrections. First of all, he found the subtle road to victory in one of the lines which I had examined. Secondly, he established that Black achieves a draw much more easily than in my lines, if the king occupies d5, something that is both possible and necessary, even with the rook on b7!

4…Ke6! (also good is 4…Ke5!) **5 Kc2 Rb5 6 Kc3** (6 g4 hg 7 fg f5 8.gf+ K×f5 or 8 h5 fg! is not dangerous) **6…Kd5!**



On 7 Kd3, simplest is 7…Rb3+ 8 Ke2 Ke5!?, while on 7 Rb8 – 7…Kc6 8 Kd4 Rb4+, and it useless for the king to move forward: 9 Ke5 Rb5+ 10 Kf6 Rf5+ and 11…R×f3.

I came upon the position after 7 R×f7 R×b6 8 Re7, after analyzing quite a different line. Cutting the opponent's king off along the e-file, White intends to return his king to the right flank and then begin to set his pawns in motion. Black draws by playing 8…Rf6! 9 Re3 (9 f4 Re6!=), and now:

(a) 9…Ra6!? 10 Kd3 Ra2 11 Re4 (11 f4 Kd6) 11…Rg2 12 Ke3 R×g3 13 Kf2 Rg4! 14 R×g4 hg 15 fg Ke4! 16 Kg3 Ke5! 17 Kf3 Kf6!= (we saw this endgame in the game Yusupov-Ljubojevic, in diagram 1-13);

(b) 9…Rf5!? 10 f4 (10 Kd3 g5=) 10…Kd6 (but not 10…Rf6 11 Kd3 Re6? 12 R×e6 K×e6 13 Ke4 Kf6 14 f5! gf+ 15 Kf4+–) 11 Kd3 Ra5 12 Ke2 (12 Ke4 Ke6=) 12…Kd7 (Black cannot do without this move: the rook would have to defend the g6-pawn along the sixth rank) 13 Kf3 Ra1!? (not allowing 14 g4) 14 Re5 Ra3+ 15 Kg2 Ra2+ 16 Kh3 Ra6 17 f5 gf 18 R×f5 Rh6 19 Kg2 Ke6 20 Rg5 Kf7=.

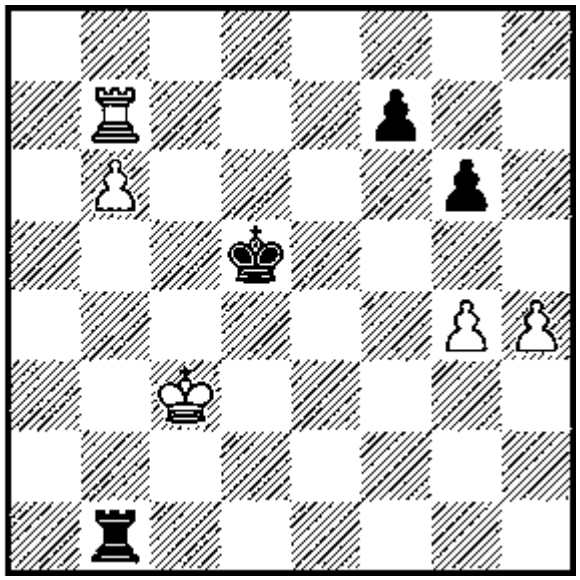
It is worth noting that these variations are not forced – there are other similar defensive set-ups. Moreover, White could sidestep them if, instead of 6 Kc3, he played 6 Kd3 Kd5 7 R×f7 R×b6 8 Re7. But even here, after 8…Rb3+ 9 Ke2 Ra3, Black can still count on drawing.

7 g4 hg 8 fg

Now, premature is 8…f5 9 g5! (9 gf gf 10 h5 Kc6=) 9…f4 10 Rb8!, for example, 10…f3 11 Kd2 Rb4 (11…Rb2+ 12 Ke1 Kc6 13 Rg8 Re2+ 14 Kf1 Re6 15 Kf2 K×b6 16 K×f3 Kc7 17 h5! gh 18 g6+–) 12 h5 gh 13 g6 Rb2+ 14 Ke1 Re2+ 15 Kf1 Re7 16 Rh8 Rg7 17 R×h5+ Kc6 18 Rg5 K×b6 19 Kf2+– (Dvoretsky). But after **8…Rb1!**, White does not have a win.

9-200

W?



(a) 9 h5 gh 10 gh Kc6 11 R×f7 K×b6=;

(b) 9 Rb8 Kc6 10 b7 (10 Rc8+ Kd6) 10…Rf1= or 10…Rh1=;

(c) 9 Kc2 Rb4 (also possible is 9…Rb5) 10 h5 gh 11 gh Kc5! 12 Rb8 Rh4=;

(d) 9 Kd3 f5!? (9…Rb5 is also not bad, or 9…Rb3+ 10 Ke2 Ke6) 10 gf gf 11 h5 Kc6 12 Rb8 Rh1= (analysis by Pogosyan).

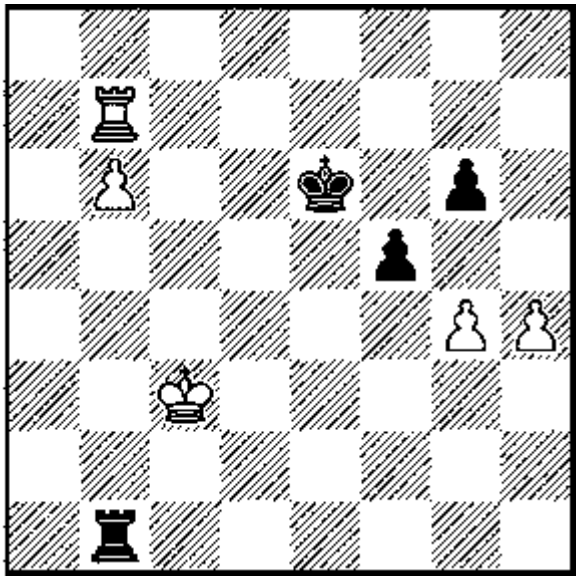
We could, in principle, confine ourselves to this. But I wanted to show what dangers might await Black if he defends less precisely, especially since the variations which arise are rather interesting.

Instead of 6…Kd5!, I examined **6…Rb1**, which, while not losing, does give his opponent additional possibilities.

(a) I had made a real mistake in the analysis of the line **7 g4 hg 8 fg f5?** (necessary is 8…Kd5!, arriving, by a transposition of moves, to the drawn position which we just examined).

9-201

W?



9 g5 f4 is not dangerous, or 9 gf+ K×f5 10 Rb8 Kg4 11 b7 Kh3! (11…Rb6? 12 h5! gh 13 Rg8+ Kf3 14 b8Q R×b8 15 R×b8 h4 16 Rh8! Kg3 17 Kd3 h3 18 Ke2!+–) 12 Kd4 Rb2 13 Kc5 Rb1 14 Kc6 Rc1+ 15 Kd6 Rb1 16 Ke5 (16 Ke6 Kg4 17 Kf6 Rb6+ 18 Kg7 Kg3=) 16…Rb6! 17 Kf4 Rb5!=. On 9 Kc2 Rb5 10 h5, there follows 10…fg!=.

9 h5! gh (9…fg 10 hg g3 11 g7 Rc1+ 12 Kd2 Rc8 13 Ke2+–)

I further examined 10 gh f4! (10…Kf6? 11 h6+–; 10…Kd6? 11 Rg7+–; 10…Rh1? 11 Rc7! Kd6 12 Rh7 Rb1 13 b7 Ke5 14 h6 Kf6 15 Rd7+–) 11 Kd3 Rh1! 12 Rh7 (12 Rc7 R×h5 13 b7 Rb5) 12…Rb1 13 b7 (13 Ke4 Rb4+ 14 Kf3 Kf5) 13…Kf6 (13…Kf5? 14 Rg7; 13…f3=) 14 Ke4 Rb4+ 15 Kf3 Kg5=.

Pogosyan found the powerful zwischenzug **10 Kc2!!**, expelling the rook from b1. On 10…Rh1,

11 Rc7 Kd6 12 Rc8 is decisive, and after 10…Rg1, the most precise is 11 Rg7+–. After 10…Rb5 (or 10…Rb4) 11 gh, achieving a draw is not possible, inasmuch as 11…f4 12 h6 is not that effective: the f-pawn, without any support from the rook on the first rank, is easily held back by the king. 10…Rb4 11 gh Kd5 12 Kc3 Rb1 13 h6 Kc5 14 Rf7 K×b6 15 h7 Rh1 16 Kd4+– also does not help.

(b) On **7 Rb8**, it is necessary to reply 7…Kd5! 8 g4 hg 9 fg Kc6=, or 8 b7 Kc6 9 Kd4 Rg1 10 Rf8 K×b7 11 R×f7+ Kc8 12 Ke4 R×g3 13 Kf4 Rg1=, or 8 Rb7 Rb5=.

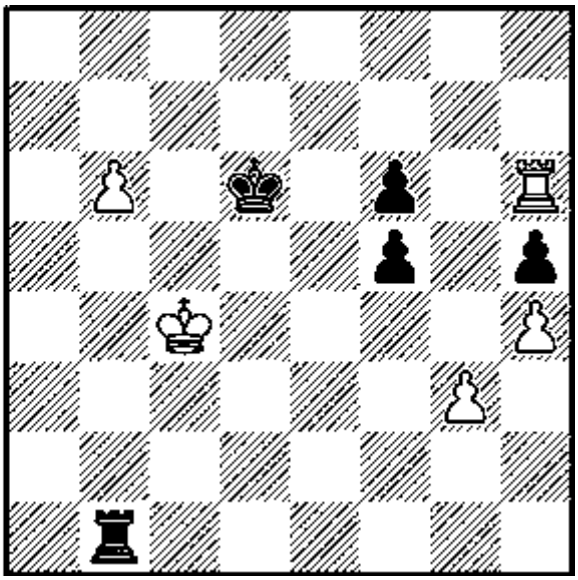
The alternative, **7…Kd6? 8 Kc4 Rb2**, allows White to return to the winning plan demonstrated in the previous line: **9 Rb7! Ke6 10 g4! hg 11 fg f5 12 h5! gh 13 Kc3!! Rb1 14 Kc2!!+–**.

I noted in the book the choice between 7…Kd5 and 7…Kd6, but preferred to focus on the second possibility, to demonstrate an interesting attempt for White (which I will nevertheless provide, although is has lost any practical significance).

9 f4?! Rb1 10 f5 gf (otherwise 11 fg fg 12 Rg8) 11 Rh8 f6! 12 Rh6!

9-202

B?



Now the natural 12…Ke5? leads to a loss after 13 Kc5 Rb3 14 Rg6 f4 15 gf+ K×f4 16 Kc6.

12…Ke6! 13 Kc5 Rc1+!.

Before attacking g3, it is useful to drive the king to b7 where it will impede its own pawn. Incidentally, with the king on e5, the white king can be protected from checks on b8, not b7.

14 Kb5 Rb1+ 15 Kc6 Rc1+ 16 Kb7 Rc3

And here is the main advantage of the king on e6: White cannot defend the g3-pawn with the rook (17 Rg6 Kf7!).

17 R×h5 R×g3 18 Kc7!? Rc3+ (18…Rg7+ 19 Kc6) 19 Kb8 Rb3!? (19…f4 20 Rb5 f3) 20 b7 Rb1!, and, as shown in subsequent analysis, Black saves the game.

(c) **7 Kc4 Rc1+ 8 Kb3 Rb1+ 9 Ka2!?** White plans Rb8 followed by a king advance. He could not break through to the pawn along the c-file, but the a-file lies open.

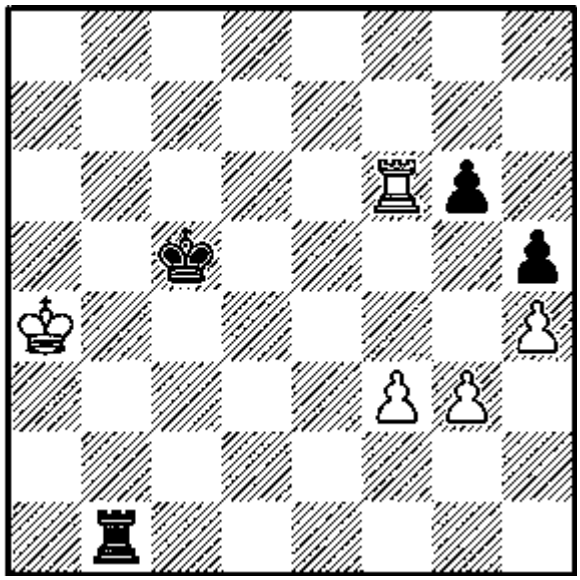
In case of 9 Ka3, Black parries the threat by 9…Kd5! (both 9…Rb5? 10 Ka4 Rb1 11 Rb8! Kd6 12 Ka5 and 9…Ra1+ 10 Kb2 Ra5 11 Kb3 Ra1 12 Rb8! Kd6 13 Kb4 Kc6 14 Rf8 K×b6 15 R×f7 are bad). White responds with 10 Ka4! (10 Rb8 Kc6 11 Rc8+ Kd6 or 11 Rf8 R×b6 12 R×f7 Kd5=) 10…Ra1+ 11 Kb3 Rb1+ 12 Kc2 Rb5 13 R×f7 R×b6, and a drawn position, which we have already discussed, has arisen (cf. diagram 9-199, the variation 7 R×f7 R×b6), only with the insignificant difference that here the king is on c2 instead of c3.

9…Rb5 10 Ka3 Rb1

A quicker draw can be achieved in a pawn endgame with a pawn less: 10…Kd5 11 Ka4 Kc5!? 12 Rc7+ K×b6 13 R×f7 Rf5! 14 R×f5 gf 15 Kb4 Kc6 16 Kc4 Kd6 17 Kd4 Ke6= (reciprocal zugzwang!).

11 Rb8! Kd6 12 Ka4 Kc6 13 Rc8+! Kb7! (13…K×b6?? 14 Rb8+; 13…Kd6? 14 Ka5) **14 Rc7+ K×b6 15 R×f7 Kc5 16 Rf6**

9-203



B?

How should Black proceed? 16…Rf1? 17 f4 △ R×g6 is hopeless, while 16…Ra1+? 17 Kb3 Rf1 18 Kc3! Kd5 19 Kd3 Ke5 20 Ke2! K×f6 21 K×f1 leads to a lost pawn endgame.

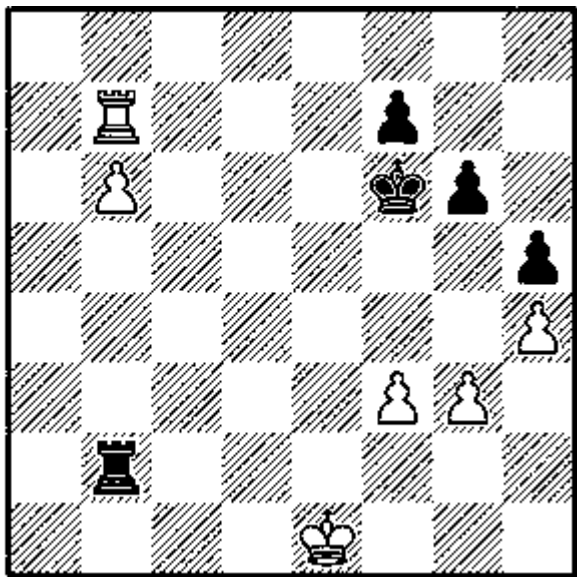
16…g5!! (suggested by Zviagintsev) **17 hg** (17 Rf5+ Kc4; 17 Rh6 Kc4) **17…Rg1 18 f4 R×g3 19 g6 h4 20 f5 h3 21 Rf8 Kd5**=

I would like to add that even with the white pawn on f2 (instead of f3) it is still a draw: 16…Rb4+ 17 Ka3 Rg4 18 Kb2! Kd4! (18…Kd5? loses to 19 Ra6! Ke5 20 f4+ Kf5 21 Ra3, the same is 19…Ke4 20 Ra3 Kf5 21 f4 – because of the tragicomic rook position on g4) 19 Kc2 (19 Ra6 Kd3! 20 Ra3+ Ke2 21 f4 Kf2; 19 Re6 g5 or 19…Re4) 19…Ke5 20 Ra6 Kf5=.

As can be seen, this endgame is extremely complicated. One can hardly remember all its intricacies, but after all, one should not. Understanding the basic ideas is enough.

Speaking about ideas… Let's return to the very beginning of this ending.

9-204



B

We now have the right to question the natural move 3…Rb3?!.

The idea was to tie down the king to the f3-pawn. But since the king is not going to protect it, and since Black, as has become clear, cannot justify capturing it, why waste a tempo withdrawing the rook? Stefan Bücker correctly noted that there is a relatively simple draw after **3…Ke6!? 4 Kd1 f6 5 Kc1 Rb5 6 Kd2(c2) g5**.

He even proposed another way to conduct the defense: the immediate activation of the king by **3…Ke5!? 4 Kd1 Kd4 5 Kc1 Rb5** 6 Rd7+ Ke3 7 b7 f5! (but not 7…K×f3? 8 Kc2, with the threat of transferring the rook to the b-file). The draw is also still attainable here, but the lines are much more intense. Here is one of them: 8 Kc2 Kf2 9 f4 Rb6 10 Rd2+ Ke1 11 Rd1+ Ke2! 12 Rb1 Rc6+, and the white king has nowhere to hide from the checks.

Finally, analogous to the basic defensive idea in the Kantorovich/Steckner position (diagram

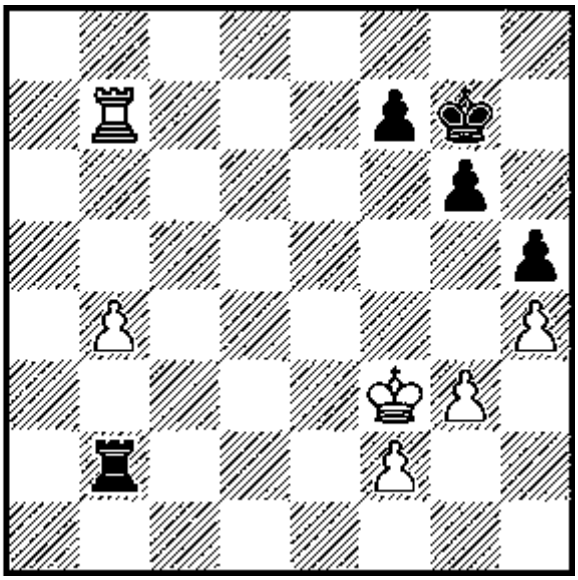
9-158), **3…g5!? 4 hg+ K×g5 5 Rb8** (5 Kd1 h4=) **5…Kf6 6 Kd1 Ke7** is worth serious attention.

Portisch – Petrosian

Palma de Mallorca cmqf (12) 1974

9-205

B



1…Kh6

Petrosian prepares …f7-f6 and …g6-g5. The positional defense method (à la Kantorovich), starting with 1…Kf6 had not yet been discovered and still is not widely known.

2 Ke3?!

Portisch suggests a more energetic approach: 2 b5!? f6 3 b6 g5 4 Rb8 gh 5 gh Kg6 6 Ke4+–. The evaluation of the final position is correct, but the defense can be improved. As Pogosyan established, Black draws by continuing 5…Rb4 (instead of 5…Kg6?) 6 Ke3 Kg7! 7 Kd3 R×h4 8 Kc3 Rh1. White may try 4 Ke4!?, but here Black saves himself by playing 4…R×f2 (and, most importantly, without exchanging pawns on h4). However, to avoid the pitfalls of complicated calculations, the move order can be changed: 3…Rb4! 4 Rb8 g5 5 Ke3 Kg7!= (or 5…gh 6 gh Kg7!=).

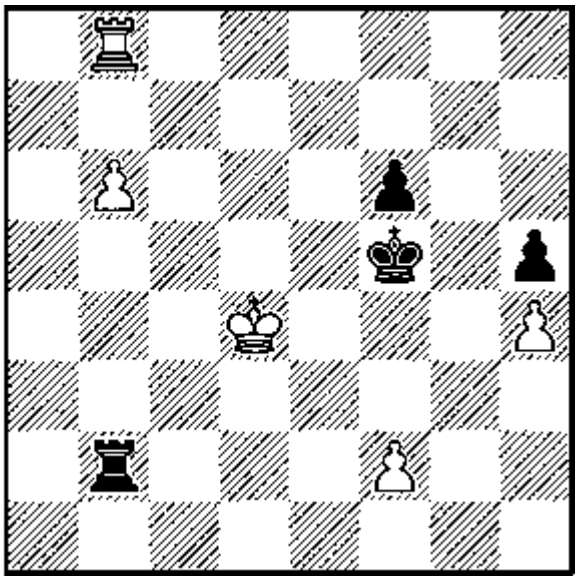
2…f6 3 Rb6 Kg7 4 Rb7+ Kh6 5 Rb8?!

In Kantorovich's opinion, the correct line is 5 b5 g5 6 Kd4 gh 7 gh Kg6 (7…Rb4+ 8 Kc5 R×h4 9 Ra7 Rh1 10 Ra4 h4 11 b6 h3 12 b7 Rb1 13 Rb4 Rc1+ 14 Kb6+–) 8 b6 R×f2 9 Ra7 Rb2 10 Kc5 Rc2+ 11 Kd6 Rb2 12 Kc6 Kf5 13 Ra4+–. However, 8…Kf5! (instead of 8…R×f2) improves the defense and leads to a draw.

5…g5 6 b5 gh 7 gh Kg6 8 b6 Kf5 9 Kd4

9 b7 does not win in view of 9…Rb4! 10 Kd3 Kf4 11 Kc3 Rb1 12 Kd4 Kf3 13 Kd5 K×f2 14 Ke6 Rb6+ 15 Kf5 Kf3 16 Kg6 Kg4= (Kantorovich).

9-206



B?

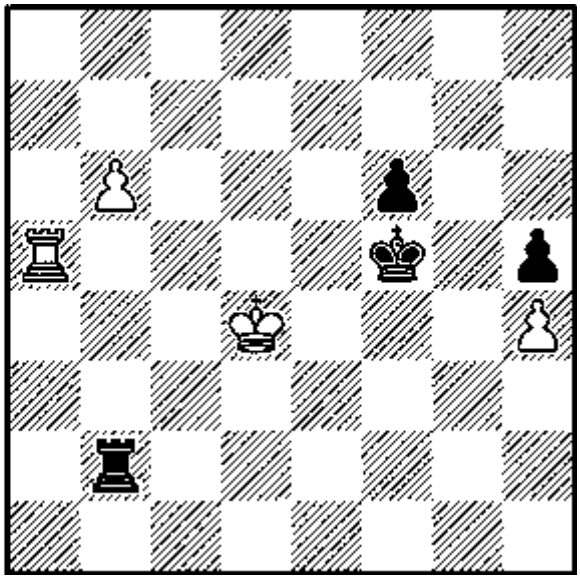
9…R×f2?

A draw could be achieved rather simply: 9…Kg4! 10 Rg8+ K×h4 11 Kc5 Rc2+! (a standard method: the king is driven back with checks so that it is forced to stand in front of the pawn) 12 Kd6 Rb2 13 Kc7 Rc2+ 14 Kb8 R×f2 15 b7 Rb2 16 Kc7 f5= (Averbakh).

10 Ra8 Rb2 11 Kc5 (△ 12 Ra4+–) **11…Rc2+** (11…Kg4 12 Ra4+ Kg3 13 Rb4 Rc2+ 14 Kd6 Rc8 15 Ke6 is hopeless) **12 Kd4?! Rb2 13 Ra5+?**

As noted by Pogosyan, White had to repeat move: 13.c5 Rc2+, and now play 14 Kb5! Rb2+ 15 Ka6 Ra2+ 16 Kb7+– (after the rook withdraws, 17 Ra4 decides matters) or 15…Kg4 16 b7 K×h4 17 b8Q+–.

9-207



B?

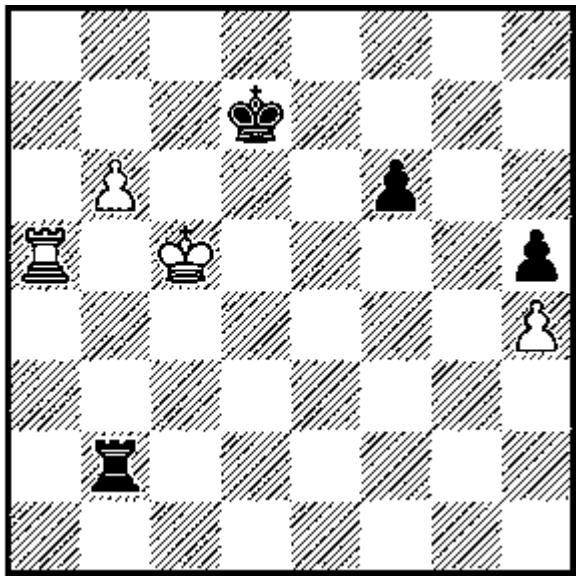
Should the king go forward or backwards? Of course, 13…Kg4 suggests itself (and works after 14 Kc5 K×h4=). However White has the strong reply 14 Ra4! with the threat 15 Kc3+. Let us look further: 14…Kg3 15 Kc5 f5 16 Rb4 Rc2+ 17 Kd6 Rc8 18 b7 Rb8 19 Kc7 Rh8 20 b8Q R×b8 21 R×b8 K×h4 (21…f4 22 Kd6 f3 23 Ke5 f2 24 Rf8 K×h4 25 Ke4+–) 22 Kd6 Kg4 (22…Kg3 23 Ke5 f4 24 Ke4+– or 23…h4 24 K×f5 h3 25 Rb3+ Kg2 26 Kg4 h2 27 Rb2+ Kg1 28 Kg3+–) 23 Ke5 h4 24 Kd4! (24 Rb4+ f4!) 24…h3 (24…f4 25 Kd3 Kf3 26 Rh8! or 25 Ke4 Kg3 26 Rg8+) 25 Ke3 h2 26 Rg8+ Kh3 27 Kf2 h1N+ 28 Kf3+–.

Yet Black can survive even after 14 Ra4, as Igor Zaitsev has shown! He discovered 14…Kh3!! (instead of 14…Kg3?) 15 Kc5 f5 16 Rb4 R×b4! 17 K×b4 f4 18 b7 f3 19 b8Q f2=: a queen does not win against a bishop pawn!

13…Ke6 14 Kc5 Rc2+?

An error that leads to a rapid loss. He should have played 14…Kd7!

9-208



W

Neither 15 Ra7+ Kc8 16 Rh7 Rc2+ 17 Kd5 Rb2 nor 17 Kd6 Rc4! 18 R×h5 Kb7 19 Rh8 f5 is dangerous.

At first I thought that White would win by continuing 15 Ra8! f5 16 Rh8 (16 Rf8 Ke6!) 16…f4 17 R×h5 f3 18 Rf5 f2 (18…Rh2 19 Rf8!) 19 Rf8 (19 h5 Re2!? △ 20…Re5+). However, Black has a way to draw with an attack on the b-pawn: 19…Rc2+ 20 Kb5 Rb2+ 21 Ka6 Kc6! 22 Rf6+ Kc5=.

15 Kb5 Kd6 16 Ka6 Kc6 17 Ra1 Rc4 18 b7 Rb4 19 Rc1+ Kd7 20 Rc8 Black resigned.

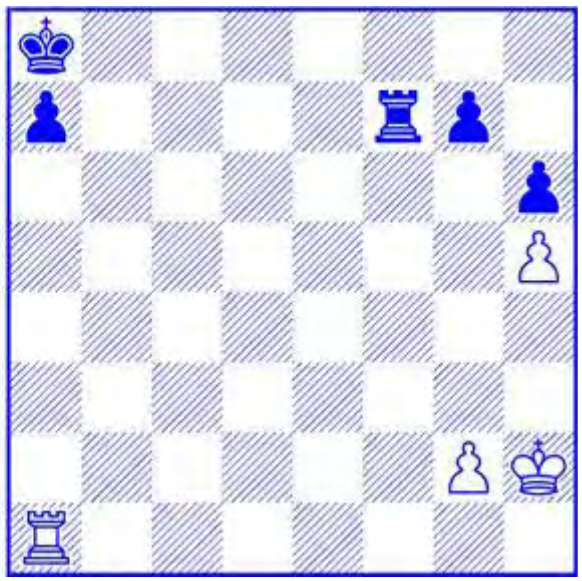
The Rook at the Side of the Pawn

As we have already seen, ***putting the rook to one side of the passed pawn makes sense if the pawn is far advanced, and also when it is blockaded by the king.*** Here we shall be discussing one more case: ***the rook should go to the side of the pawn, when it is simultaneously defending the pawns on the other wing.***

I. Rabinovich – Ragozin

USSR ch, Tbilisi 1937

9-209



B?

1…Rf5! 2 g4 Rg5 3 Kg3 a5–+

After this maneuver, the king goes to the passed pawn in order to support its advance to the promotion square. His adversary lacks counterplay because the rook securely protects all the pawns.

4 Kf3 Ka7 5 Ra4 Kb6 6 Ke3 Rd5!

It is important to cut the king off from the queenside. After 6…Kb5?! 7 Rd4 a4 8 Kd3, winning would have been more complicated.

7 Rf4

If 7 Ke4, then 7…Rb5! (△ 8…Rb4+) 8 Ra1 Rg5 (driving the king back) 9 Kf4 Kb5. Defense by frontal attack is useless here.

7…Rd7 (△ 8…Kb5) **8 Rf5 a4 9 g5 hg 10 R×g5 a3 11 Ke4 a2 12 Rg1 Kb5 13 Ra1 Ra7 14 Kd3**

On 14 Kf5, the simplest reply is 14…Ra6!, but 14…Kb4 15 Kg6 Kb3 16 Rg1 Rc7! is also strong enough (as in Taimanov-Averbakh, diagram 9-110).

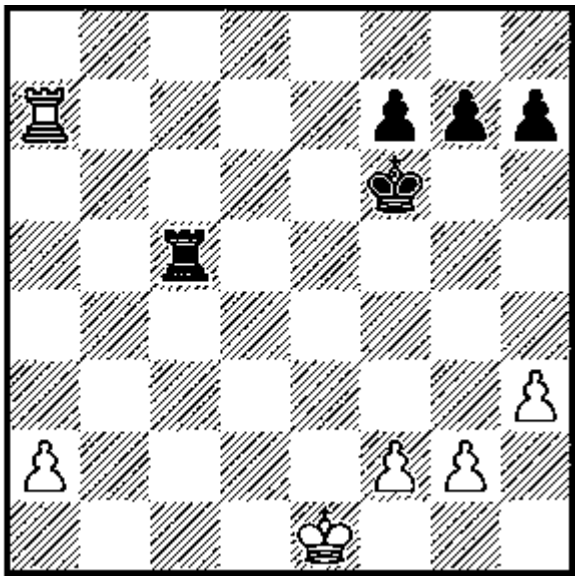
14…Kb4 15 Kc2 Ka3 16 Rg1 Rc7+ 17 Kd3 Kb2 White resigned.

It is almost always sensible to go to the defense from the side, when the passed pawn has not advanced further than the second or third rank, because in that case, the rook is usually protecting its other pawns as well.

This sort of position occurs quite often in practical play but still does not have any definite evaluation.

Karpov – Knaak
Baden Baden 1992

9-210



W?

1 Ra3!

After 1 Kd2? Rd5+, the king can hardly escape from the rook checks because it must watch the second rank, while 1 a4? Rc2 leads to a standard situation with the black rook behind the passed pawn. Karpov brings his rook to the third or second rank where it will protect everything.

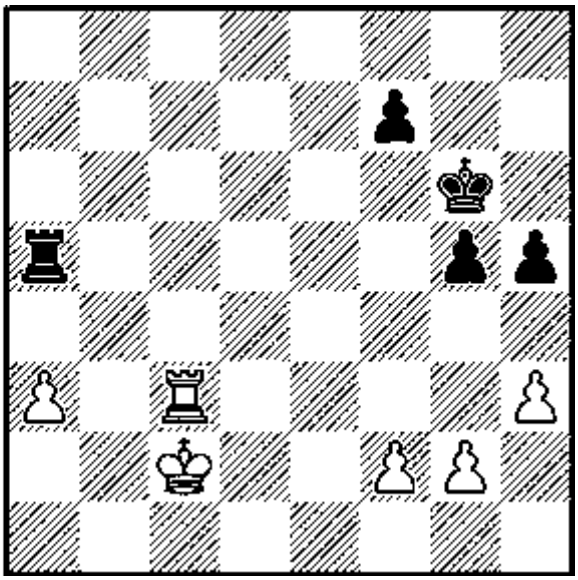
1…g5?

An unfavorable setup, particularly in combination with Black's next move (the king should have been kept in the center, to fight against the passed pawn if necessary). A more clever idea was 1…h5!?, planning an eventual …h5-h4 and …Rg5. Another natural continuation was 1…Rc2!? 2 Rf3+ Ke6. If White tries 3 a3?!, then 3…Ra2 4 Kd1 f5 5 Kc1 g5 6 Kb1 Rd2 and White, with his king cut off, can hardly expect success. A stronger alternative is 3 Re3+ Kd6 4 Re2 Rc3 5 Kd2 Ra3 6 Kc1. I dare not judge whether White's advantage is sufficient for a win here.

2 Kd2 Kg6 3 Rc3 Ra5 4 a3 h5 5 Kc2

9-211

B



5…Ra8 6 Kb3 Rb8+ 7 Ka2 Ra8

7…Rd8!? 8 Rc2 Rd3 deserved attention. But if Black proceeds this way, then 5…Ra8 was senseless (5…h4!? 6 Kb3 Rb5+ 7 Ka2 Rd5).

8 Rc4 f5 (8…Re8 9 Rb4 Re2+ 10 Rb2 Re4 11 Kb3+–) **9 a4 Kf6 10 Ka3 Ke5 11 Rc5+ Ke4** (11…Kf4!?) **12 a5 h4 13 Ka4 Kf4 14 Rc4+**

14 Kb5 is also strong. Ftacnik criticizes it on account of 14…Rb8+ 15 Kc6 Rb2 16 a6 R×f2 17 Ra5 Rc2+ 18 Kb6 Rc8 19 Kb7 Rh8 20 a7 Kg3⇄, but if White, instead of 16 a6?, includes the zwischenschach 16 Rc4+!, Black gets no counterplay.

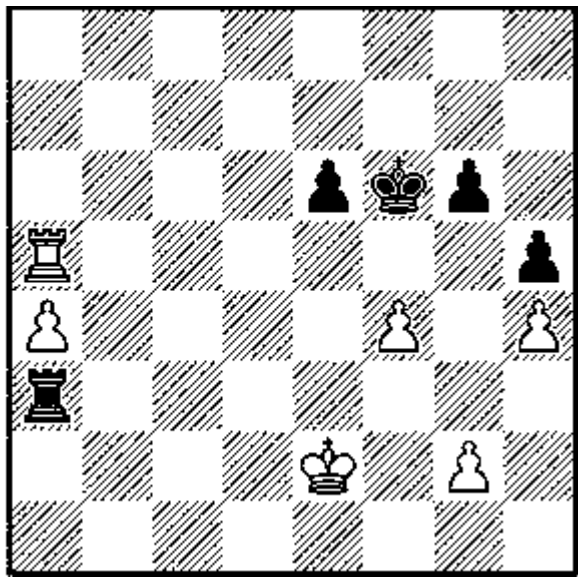
14…Ke5 15 Rb4 Kd5 16 Rb5+ Ke4 17 Rb6 Kf4 18 a6 g4 19 Ka5 g3 (19…gh 20 Rb4+! Ke5 21 ghi) **20 Rb4+ Ke5 21 f3 f4 22 Re4+ Kf5 23 Re2 Kf6 24 Kb6** Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Averbakh – Euwe
Switzerland ct 1953

9-212

B



1…Rg3??

A grave mistake as Euwe allows his opponent to bring his rook to g5 with tempo. White's rook will safely protect all his pawns there (after g2-g3 and a4-a5). After 1…Ra2+!, a draw was absolutely obvious.

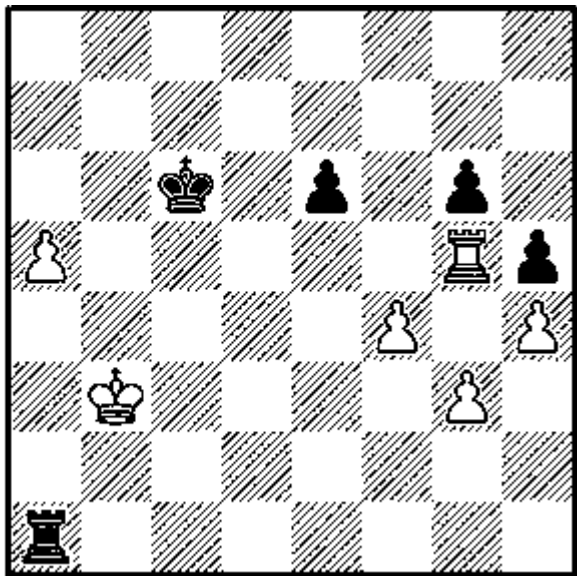
2 Rg5! Ra3 3 a5 Kf7

Sometimes in similar situations, one succeeds in preventing the king's approach to the passed pawn by cutting the king off along a file, e.g., 3…Rc3 4 Kd2 Rc4 5 g3 Rc6. This method does not

work in our case: White plays 6 Kd3 Rc1 7 Kd4 Rc2 8 Rc5 Rg2 9 a6 Ra2 (9…R×g3 10 Ra5) 10 Rc6 Kf5 11 Kc5, obviously outrunning his opponent.

4 Kd2 Ke7 5 Kc2 Kd7 6 Kb2 Ra4 7 g3 Kc6 8 Kb3 Ra1

9-213



The simple 9 R×g6 is strong enough for a win, but Averbakh finds a more accurate solution: a triangular maneuver with his king, putting Black in zugzwang.

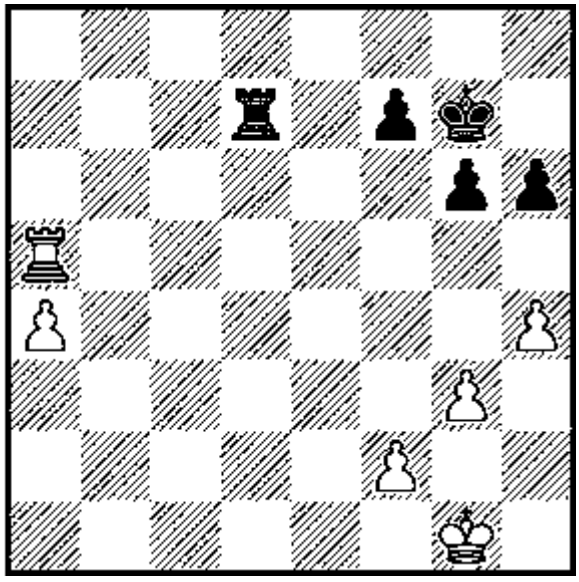
9 Kb4 Rb1+ 10 Kc4 Ra1 11 Kb3! ⊙ Black resigned.

Every king's move opens the road to the white counterpart, while 11…Rb1+ is met with 12 Ka2 Rb4 (12…Rb5 13 R×b5 K×b5 14 Kb3 K×a5 15 Kc4+–) 13 Ka3, and Black's g-pawn will be captured without losing the passed pawn.

Leko – Anand

Linares 2003

9-214



Viswanathan Anand undoubtedly knew that such endgames are, as a rule, drawn. So it is hard to understand why he decided not to set up the standard pawn structure with 1…h5!. After 2 Kg2 Rd3! and 3…Ra3, the rook gets behind the passed pawn, while also restricting the enemy king, and Black would draw without any particular difficulty.

There was no need to fear 2 Rc5 and 3 a5 (or 3 Rc4). He would have a reason to concern himself with the flank defense of the pawn if the a-pawn had already reached the sixth or seventh rank.

1…Rd1+?! 2 Kg2 Ra1?

"When the engineer starts looking for new paths, the train goes off the rails." It was still not too late to play 2…h5, even though at this point it would be a little weaker than on the previous move,

since White's king can now reach f3.

3 g4!

Of course! With this structure, Black has a much harder time getting counterplay on the kingside. Additionally, this relatively new situation means that the standard recipes are no longer any good. Black must now create a brand-new defensive method, without knowing if his choice of plan will offer him realistic saving chances or not.

As an example, the international master Julen Arizmendi suggested that Black play 3…h5!? 4 g5! Ra3 here, and presented a tremendously complex analysis, showing that Black draws with exact play. However, at the very end of his main variation, Steckner found an improvement for White, which wins. (You can read all the details in Karsten Müller's January 2004 article at chesscafe.com.)

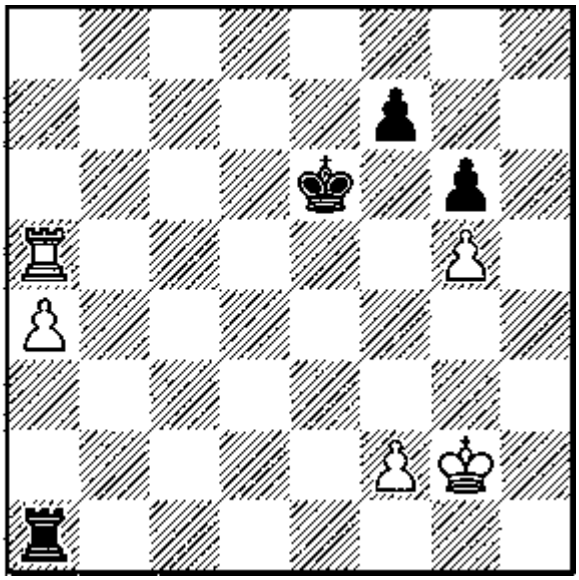
3…Kf6 4 Kg3

Grandmaster Mihail Marin, in his book, *Secrets of Chess Defence*, opined that 4 g5+ would have been an easy win. But, if there is in fact a win there, it would not be simple at all, and most likely the position is drawn. Here are a few variations based on some later material published by Marin and my own analyses, and refinements made by Vardan Pogosyan a few years later.

The first moves are obvious: 4…hg 5 hg+ Ke6.

9-215

W

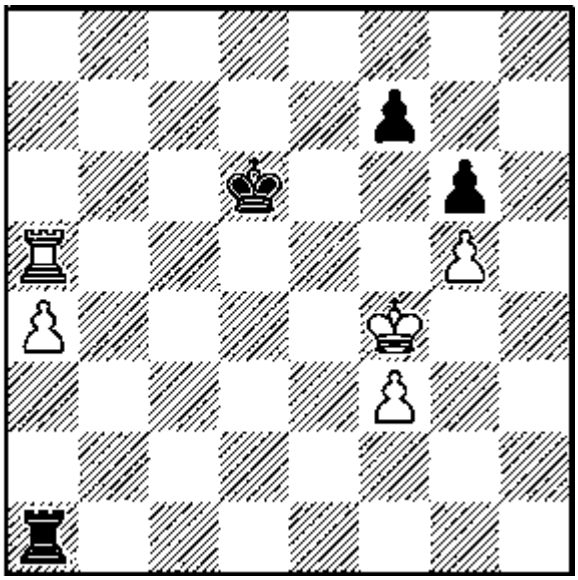


The premature 6 f4? would allow Black to restrict the mobility of the enemy king: 6…Ra3! 7 Kf2 f5!? (7…Kd6 is also possible) 8 Ke2 Kd6 9 Kd2 Kc6 (threatening 10…Kb6) 10 Ra6+ Kd5 11 Kc2 Ke4 12 Kb2 Rd3 13 R×g6 K×f4 14 a5 Kg4, with an easy draw.

It would be more logical to play 6 Kg3 Ra2 7 f3 Ra1 8 Kf4. Black continues 8…Kd6

9-216

W



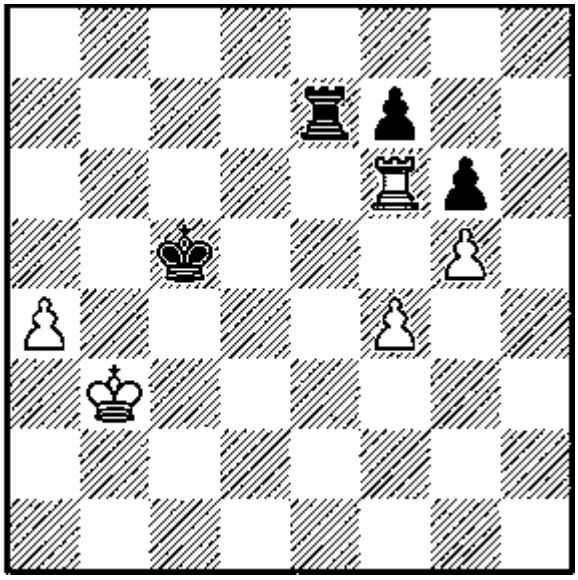
If 9 Ra7, then 9…Ke6 10 a5 (10 Ke4 Re1+ 11 Kd4 Rd1+ 12 Kc4 Rc1+ 13 Kb5 Rb1+ 14 Ka6 Rf1) 10…Ra4+ 11 Ke3 Kf5 12 R×f7+ K×g5 13 Ra7 Kh4 14 a6 Kg3 15 Ra8 Ra3+ (nor does 15…g5 16 a7 Kg2 lose) 16 Ke4 Ra4+ 17 Ke5 K×f3 18 Kf6 Kg4 19 K×g6 Ra1 20 Kf6 Kf4 21 Ke6 Ke4 22 Kd6 Kd4 23 Kc6 (23 a7 Ra6+! 24 Kc7 Kc5 25 Kb7 Rb6+, but not 23…Ra2? 24 Kc6 Kc4 25 Rc8!+–) 23…Rc1+! 24 Kb7 Rb1+ 25 Ka7 Kc5 26 Rb8 Rh1=.

9 Ke4 Re1+ 10 Kd4 is stronger. On 10…Rf1 White replies 11 Ra6+ Ke7 12 Ke4 – with the king cut off on the sixth rank, Marin demonstrated a win for White. It is worth noting that if Black waits, White will play f3-f4, Ra8, pawn to a7, and then the kingside breakthrough with f4-f5!, and if the pawn is taken, g5-g6! decides.

After 10…Rd1+ 11 Kc3!, Marin examined 11…Rc1+ (I note that there is another method of defense, viz., an alternating attack on the white pawns: 11…Rf1!? 12 Ra6+ Kc5 13 Rf6 Ra1 14 Kb3 Rb1+ 15 Ka2 Rg1! 16 f4 Rg2+) 12 Kb2 Rc4 13 Kb3 Rf4 14 Ra6+ Kc5 15 Rf6 (getting the rook to f6, where it can defend all the pawns is White's main strategic idea in this line) 15…Rb4+ 16 Ka3 Rb7 17 f4 Re7 18 Kb3

9-217

B



18…Ra7 19 f5! gf 20 R×f5+, and Black is in deep trouble.

The outcome of the struggle was determined by an error at the very end of the variation. Instead of the passive 18…Ra7?, Pogosyan suggested two ways to draw:

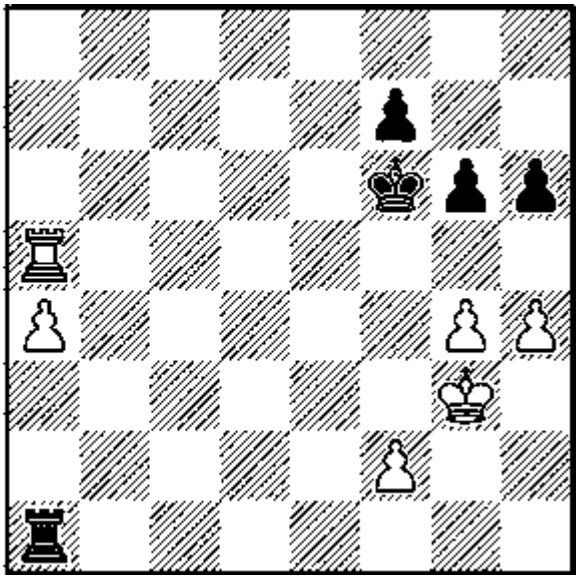
(a) 18…Rb7+! 19 Ka3 (19 Kc3 Ra7 20 Kd3 Kd5=) 19…Re7 20 f5 gf 21 R×f5+ Kc4 22 a5 Re1 23 Kb2 Re2+ 24 Kc1 Rg2 25 Kd1 Kd3 26 Ke1 Re2+ 27 Kf1 Ra2=;

(b) 18…Re3+! 19 Kb2 Re2+ 20 Kc3 Re3+ 21 Kd2 Ra3 22 R×f7 R×a4 23 Ke3 Kd5=.

Having come to the conclusion that 4.g5+ does not lead to a win, let's return to the game.

9-218

B



It might make sense to wait here: 4…Ra2. The incautious response 5 f3? would have led to a draw in view of 5…g5! 6 Rf5+ Kg6 7 h5+ Kg7 8 a5 Kg8. This pawn configuration would be ideal for White: his rook defends everything, leaving only the task of bringing his king over to the a-pawn. Unfortunately, the king is locked forever on the kingside.

Peter Leko had intended to continue with 5 Kf3 Ke6 6 Ke3, followed by f2-f3 and Ke4. But there is hardly a win for White after Steckner's suggestion of 5…g5!?:

6 hg+ hg 7 Rf5+ Kg6 8 a5 Ra4, and the white king cannot get its queenside voyage underway;

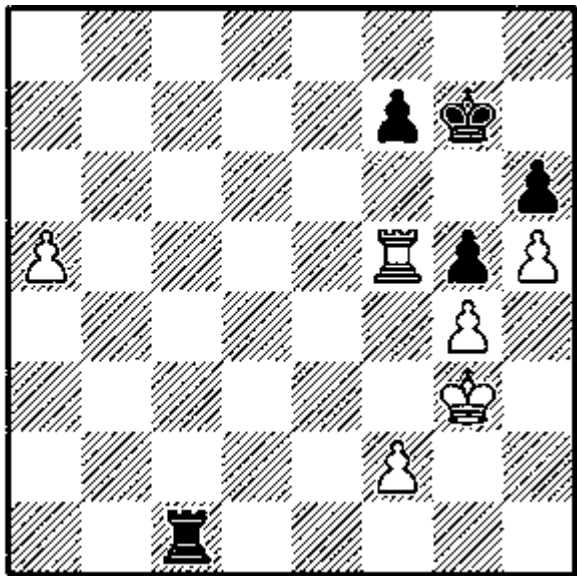
6 h5 Ke6 7 Ke3 f6 8 f3 f5! (8…Ra1 9 Ke4 Re1+ 10 Kd4 is weaker) 9 gf+ Kf6 10 Ke4 Re2+ 11 Kd4 Rf2= (my variation, but the last move was shown by Pogosyan, instead of the losing 11…Rh2? 12 Ra8);

6 Rf5+ Kg7 7 a5 (7 hg Ra3+! 8 Kg2 R×a4 9 gh+ K×h6=) 7…gh 8 Kg2 Ra3 9 f3 Ra1, and the position is drawn.

4…Rc1?!

Anand changes his defensive plan – now he intends to put his rook on the fourth rank, attacking the enemy pawns while restricting the activity of his rook and king. So Leko immediately takes his rook off the a-file, changing to the sidelong defense of his passed pawn.

5 Rb5 g5?! 6 Rf5+ Kg6 7 h5+ Kg7 8 a5



8…Ra1?

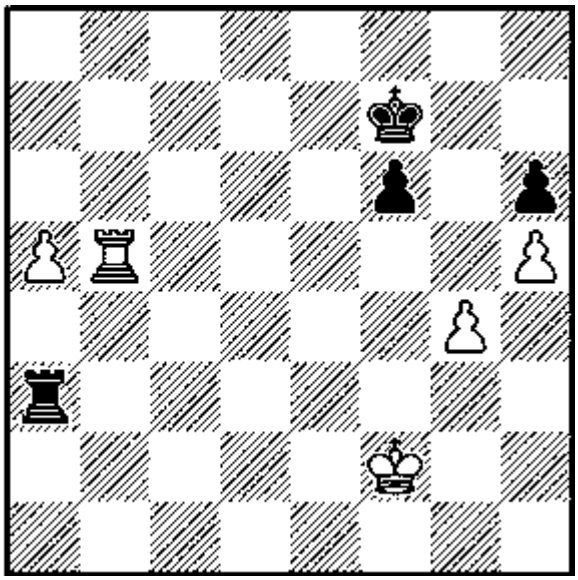
An inconsistent move, allowing White to set up the ideal configuration, where the rook securely defends all the pawns, while the king gets ready to set out for the queenside.

8…Rc4 looks more logical. In reply, Leko recommended the pawn sacrifice 9 Kf3 Ra4 10 Ke3 R×g4 11 Kd3 f6 12 Kc3, while Marin suggested 10 Rd5 (instead of 10 Ke3) 10…Kf6 11 Ke3 Ke6 (11…R×g4? is bad, in view of 12 Rd4 and 13 Ra4) 12 Rb5 R×g4 13 Rb6+ and 14 R×h6. Some analysts – myself included – studied the resulting complications, analyzing a variety of variations. It seems that the objective result, with correct play on both sides, should be a draw.

White is not obliged to give up the pawn. The most dangerous continuation for his opponent is 9 f3 Rc2 10 f4! (otherwise 10…Ra2, when the king will never get out of g3; alternatively the pawn could also have advanced to f4 on the preceding move) 10…Rc3+! 11 Kf2 gf 12 R×f4 Ra3 13 Rf5 f6 14 Rb5 Kf7:

9-220

W?



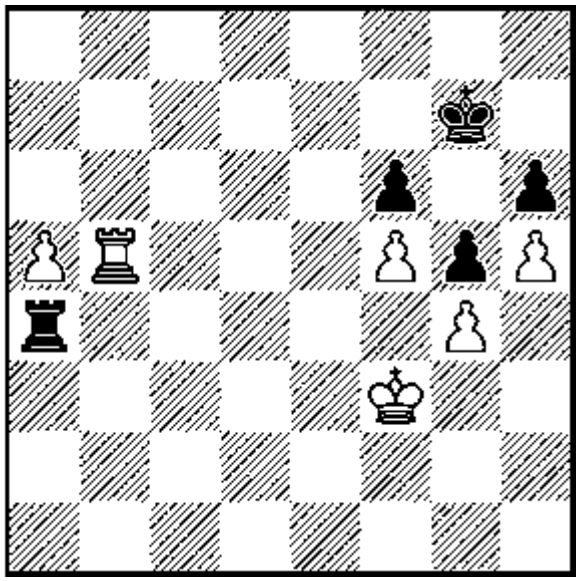
Leko continued the variation as follows: 15 Rb7+ Ke6 16 Rb6+ Ke5 17 a6 Kf4! 18 R×f6+ K×g4 19 R×h6 Kg5 20 Rb6 K×h5 21 Ke2 Kg5 22 Kd2 Kf5 23 Kc2 Ke5 24 Kb2 Ra5 25 Rh6 (25 Kb3 Kd5 26 Kb4 Ra1 27 Rh6 Rb1+ 28 Ka5 Kc5=) 25…Kd4 26 Rh4+ (26 Kb3 Ra1=) 26…Kd3 27 Rh3+ Kc4 28 Ra3 Rb5+ 29 Kc2 Rb8=.

Arizmendi established that if White plays 15 Ke2! (instead of 15 Rb7+?), he can win a vital tempo over Leko's variation. For example, 15…Ke6 (no better is 15…Ra4 16 Kf3) 16 Rb6+ Ke5 17 a6 Kf4 (17…Ra4 18 Kd3 Rd4+ 19 Kc3 R×g4 20 Rb5+ Ke6 21 Ra5 Rg8 22 a7 Ra8 23Kd4+–) 18 R×f6+ K×g4 19 R×h6 Kg5 20 Rb6 K×h5 21 Kd2 Kg5 22 Kc2 Kf5 23 Kb2 Ra5 24 Kb3 Ke5 25 Kb4 Ra1 26 Kc5+–.

Black should refrain from 11…gf?! in favor of 11…f6!. Arizmendi also analyzed this possibility, demonstrating a win for White after 12 Rb5 Ra3 13 f5! (insufficient is 13 Rb7+ Kg8 14 fg fg 15 Ra7 Ra4 16 a6 Kf8 17 Ke3 Ke8 18 Kd3 Kd8 19 Kc3 Kc8 20 Kb3 R×g4= or 18 Ra8+ Kf7 19 Kd3 Kg7 20 Ra7+ Kf6 21 Rh7 R×g4 22 R×h6+ Kg7 23 Rg6+ Kh7=) 13…Ra4 14 Kf3.

9-221

B?



He went on to look at 14…Kf7 (14…Ra3+ 15 Ke4 Ra4+ 16 Kd5 R×g4 17 Rb7+ Kg8 18 a6 is quite bad) 15 Rb7+ Ke8 16 Ra7 (the unfortunate position of the black king on the eighth rank makes itself felt).

Pogosyan strengthened the defense with the move 14…Kf8!, not allowing the king to be cut off on the edge of the board. Here is one of the possible lines: 15 Rb8+ Ke7 16 Ra8 (little is changed by 16 Rb7+ Kd6) 16…Kd6 17 Ra6+ (on 17 a6, Black, using checks from the side, keeps the king to the c-file, and then plays Ke5) 17…Ke7 18 Re6+ Kf7 19 a6 Rf4+ 20 Kg3 Ra4 21 Rb6 Ke7, and the win is not obvious.

9 Kg2! (of course not 9 f3?? Ra2=) **9…Re1**

Yet another change of defensive plans – Black tries to restrict the white king by cutting it off on the e-file. In this situation, such a method is equally as hopeless as the waiting game with 9…Ra4 10 f3 Ra2+ 11 Kf1 Kf8 12 Ke1 Ke7 13 Kd1 Ke6 14 Kc1, etc.

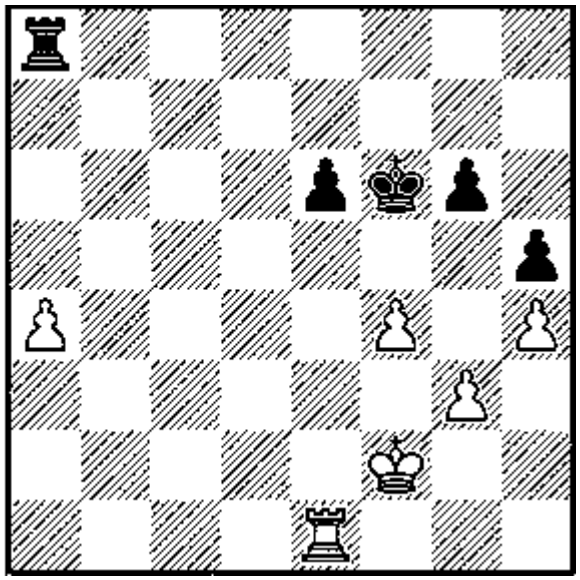
10 f3 Re6 11 Kf2 Kf8 12 Rb5 Kg7

On 12…Ke7, 13 Rb7+ and 14 Rb6 decide. Here Leko could have brought his rook around behind the passed pawn by 13 Rb3 Ra6 14 Ra3, with an easy win. But he preferred to maneuver a bit first, hoping Black would worsen his king's position.

13 Rf5 Kf8 14 Rc5 Kg7 15 Rb5 Kf8 16 Rb6 Re5 17 a6 Kg7 18 a7 Ra5 19 Rb7 Ra3 20 Ke2 Kf6 21 Kd2 Ke6 22 Kc2 f6 23 Kb2 Ra4 24 Kb3 Ra1 25 Kb4 Kd6 26 Rh7 Ke5 27 Kb5 Ra2 28 Kb6 Kd5, and Black resigned.

Exercises

9-222



9/23
W?

Common Observations about Endgames with Many Pawns

The Rook's Activity

The rook's activity is the main principle for evaluation and practical play in rook-and-pawn endgames. It can take various forms: attacking the enemy's pawns, supporting its own passed pawns, cutting the opponent's king off, or pursuing the king.

It also happens that the rook must sometimes behave passively, its functions being limited purely to defense. But in these cases ***one should relentlessly seek opportunities to activate the rook, even at cost of pawn sacrifices or a deteriorated king's position***.

The following classic ending illustrates this principle excellently.

Flohr – Vidmar
Nottingham 1936

9-223

W?

White has an obvious positional advantage, but as for a win, it is surely a long way off. The outcome of the game depends on the endgame artistry of the players.

1 Ke2!

First of all, centralize the king. In case of 1 Ra5? Black sacrifices a pawn to activate his rook: 1…c5! 2 R×a6 c4 with excellent chances for a draw. 1 b4? is also not precise: 1…Ke7 2 Ke2 Kd6 3 Kd3 Rb8!? (3…Kc7) 4 a3 Rb5.

1…Ke7 2 Kd3 Kd6 3 Ra5!

Rather than 3 Kd4?, in view of 3…Rb8 4 Ra5 c5+! 5 Kd3 Rb6.

3…Ra8 4 Kd4

Black must reckon with e3-e4 now.

4…f5!? 5 b4

Flohr strengthens his control over weak squares on the queenside. Black is faced with a problem: which defensive plan to choose.

9-224

B?

5…Rb8?

Too passive: the rook will be forced back to the unenviable role of bodyguard to the a-pawn as early as the next move.

He should have protected the pawn with the king: 5…Kc7! (△ …Kb6). Oh yes, the king would have gone away from the center, the white king, in contrast, would have had an open road for invasion, but the rook could enjoy freedom. And, as we have said, the rook's activity in rook-and-pawn endings is paramount!

White would very probably have played 6 Kc5 Kb7 7 Kd6. After 7…Re8 (also worth consideration is 7…f4!?, with the idea 8 ef d4, or 7…Kb6!?, having the same shot f5-f4! in mind)

8 Ra3 (△ Rc3). Now Black should pave the way to the second rank for his rook.

9-225

B?

(a) 8…f4? is entirely bad in view of 9 ef Re2 10 g4 with f4-f5+– to follow. Black cannot fight against the passed f-pawn because another pawn, on f3, is blocking the file from rook attacks.

(b) Levenfish and Smyslov suggest 8…d4!? 9 ed Re2 10 Rc3 R×g2 (10…Rd2 11 Rc4) 11 R×c6 R×h2 12 a4 g5 (△ …g4; …Rh6+). However, White maintains the advantage by placing the rook behind the g-pawn, 13 Rc7+! Kb6 14 Rg7!, because his own passed pawn is quite dangerous.

Such an alternative (with consequences that can hardly be calculated and evaluated over the board) is still practically better than the passive defense with the rook on a8. Moreover, it can be improved: a third way exists, although endgame treatises do not mention it.

(c) 8…g5! 9 g3

After 9 Rc3 f4 10 ef gf, Black maintains enough counterplay, for example, 11 R×c6 Rd8+ 12 Kc5 d4 13 Re6 d3 14 Re1 Rg8=.

9…g4!

Again, 9…d4?! 10 ed Re2 is dubious here in view of 11 Ra5! (11 Rc3 R×h2 and the c6-pawn is inviolable) 11…h6! 12 a4! (12 R×f5 R×a2 13 Rf7+ Kb6 14 Rc7 R×h2 15 R×c6+ Kb5) 12…Rb2 13 R×f5 R×b4 14 Kc5 R×a4 15 Rf7+ and Black's position is difficult. 10 f4 (10 fg fg 11 Rc3 Rf8=) 10…Re4 11 Rc3 Rc4∞.

6 a3 Ra8

The b6-square is perhaps even a worse place for the rook than a8.

7 e4!

White has achieved the maximum on the queenside and cannot improve his position in this sector anymore (7 a4? Rb8). Therefore he applies a standard method: widening the beachhead! After the exchange of the central pawns, the white king attacks the kingside while the rook gets full control over the fifth rank.

7…fe 8 fe de 9 K×e4

9-226

B?

9…Ra7?

Black follows the same fatal policy of passively marking time. He still should have done what we have said: to release the rook from its mission (guarding the a-pawn) by bringing the king to b6: 9…Kc7!. Now 10 Kf4? gives nothing in view of 10…Rf8+! 11 Kg3 Kb6=. Levenfish and Smyslov give the following line: 10 Re5!? Kb6 11 Re7 a5! 12 R×h7 ab 13 ab Ra4 14 Rg7 R×b4+ 15 Kf3 Rh4! 16 h3 Rh6 (this is only a short-term passivity: the rook heads for the eighth rank, to take a position behind the passed pawn) 17 Kg4 c5 18 Kg5 Rh8 19 R×g6+ Kb5 20 Rg7 c4 △ …Rc8⇄.

I think that White should not force matters. The restraining method 10 h4!? Kb6 11 g4 (11 Kf4!?) 11…Rf8 12 h5 maintains an indisputable advantage; the question is solely whether it is sufficient for a win.

10 Kf4 h6

Otherwise the king passes to h6 with decisive effect: 10…Ra8 11 Kg5 Ra7 12 Kh6 Ke6 13 g4 △ h4-h5+–.

11 h4 Ke6 12 Kg4 Ra8 13 h5! g5 (13…gh+ 14 K×h5 Rg8 15 g4+–) **14 g3!**

White has created and fixed a new weakness in Black's camp: the h6-pawn. Prior to returning his king to the center, he takes control over the f4-square. 14 Kf3 is less accurate in view of 14…Rf8+ 15 Ke4 Rf4+.

14…Ra7 15 Kf3! Ra8 16 Ke4 Ra7 17 Kd4 Kd6 18 Ke4 Ke6

9-227

W

19 Re5+! Kd6

If 19…Kf6, then 20 Rc5 Rc7 21 Ra5 Ra7 22 Kd4 Ke6 23 Kc5+–.

20 Re8 c5

The pawn endgame after 20…Re7+ 21 R×e7 K×e7 22 Ke5 is absolutely hopeless.

21 Rd8+!

Perfect endgame technique. Flohr had calculated the following line: 21…Kc7 22 Rh8 cb 23 Rh7+ (23 ab, of course, also wins) 23…Kb8 24 R×a7 K×a7 25 ab Kb6 26 Kf5 Kb5 27 Kg6 K×b4 28 K×h6 a5 29 K×g5 a4 30 h6+–. Other king retreats lose the c5-pawn.

21…Kc6 22 Rc8+ Kb6 23 R×c5 Rh7

The rook has changed its parking space, but the new one is as unattractive as the previous.

24 Re5 Kc6 25 Re6+ Kb5 26 Kf5 Rf7+ 27 Rf6 Black resigned.

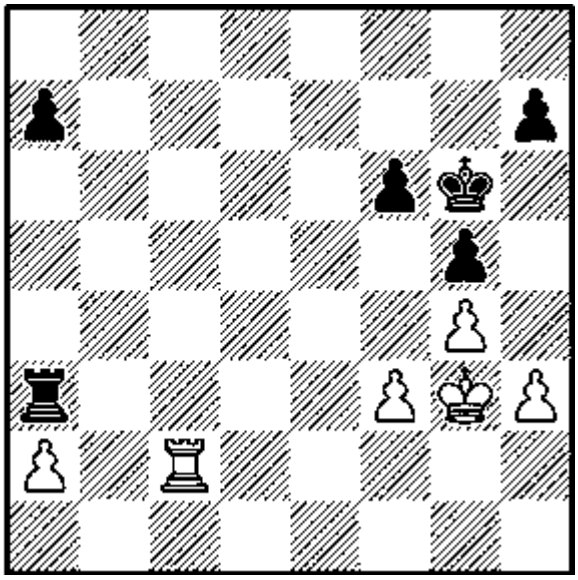
Tragicomedies

Ilivitsky – Taimanov

USSR ch, Moscow 1955

9-228

W?



Material is balanced, but Black stands better because his rook is more active. At this moment, both sides would like to improve the structure on the kingside by means of an h-pawn advance, but Black is ready to do it while White is not (because he then loses his f3-pawn).

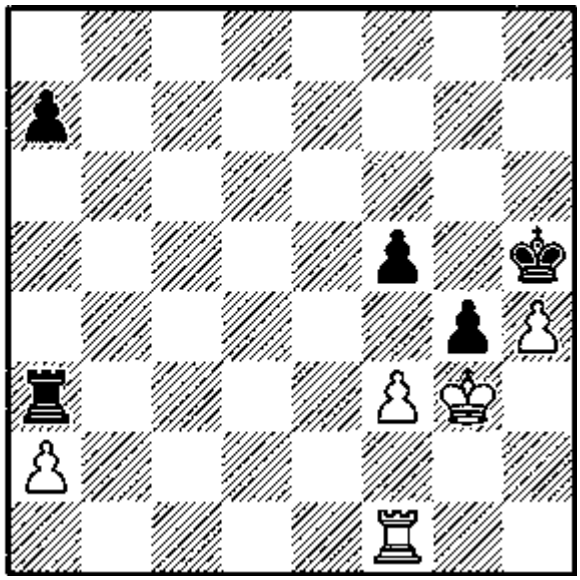
As was noted by Grigory Levenfish, with the pawn sacrifice 1 Rc6! R×a2 (1…h5 2 gh+ K×h5 3 R×f6) 2 h4 gh+ 3 K×h4, White could solve two problems at once: he activates his rook and improves the kingside situation. Then the draw is an easy matter.

1 Rh2? h5! 2 Rc2

If 2 gh+ K×h5 (△ …f6-f5-f4+) 3 h4, then 3…g4. 2 h4 could have been a logical continuation but, as Levenfish demonstrated, Black maintains a considerable advantage after 2…hg 3 K×g4 (3 hg f5 4 Rf2 K×g5–+) 3…f5+! (3…Ra4+? 4 Kg3 gh+ 5 R×h4 R×a2 leads to a drawn position) 4 Kg3 g4 5 Rf2 Kh5, and if 6 Kf4, then 6…Ra4+ 7 K×f5 g3–+.

The waiting move 6 Rf1 is more stubborn.

9-229



B?

It is appropriate to recall that very important principle of endgame play, “Do not rush,” and, without forcing matters (by 6…Ra4?!), make the move 6…a5!, strengthening the position. On 7 Kf4, 7…Ra4+? 8 K×f5 g3 9 Rg1!= does not work, but the simple 7…R×a2! leads to a win. And if 7 Rf2, then 7…Ra4! (c 8…f4+) 8 fg+ R×g4+ 9 Kf3 K×h4 (9…R×h4 is as good, since 10 Rg2 Rg4 11 R×g4 fg+ 12 Kg3 a4! wins for Black, while the pawn ending with the pawn on a7 would be drawn) 10 Rh2+ Kg5.

Marking time, 11 Rc2 Ra4, is bad: this is almost the same position we saw in the game Miles-Webb (diagram 9-105). And in the sharp line 11 Rh8 Rf4+ (also possible is the immediate 11…Ra4) 12 Ke3 Ra4 13 Rg8+ Kf6 14 Rf8+ Ke6 15 Re8+ Kf7 16 Ra8 R×a2 17 Kf4 Ke6 18 Re8+ (or 18 Ra6+) 18…Kd5, Black gets there just in time and wins. Were the pawn on a7, his opponent would manage to save himself.

2…h4+

This pawn is very strong: it presses on the white king and fixes the weakness at h3. White’s defensive mission is quite hard. In the remainder of the game, however, Taimanov was not precise enough, but his opponent missed his chance to save the game.

3 Kf2 a6

An incomprehensible move. As will soon become clear, it made sense for Black to play 3…Kf7!?, preparing the future activation of the king.

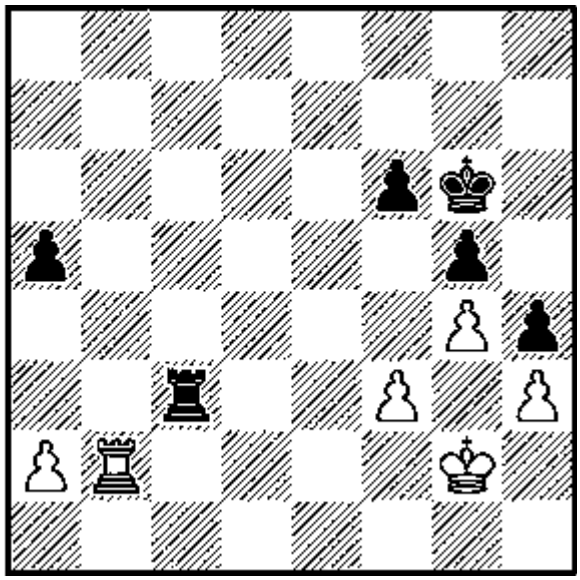
4 Rb2 Rc3?

The rook should have stayed on a3 until Black both moved the a-pawn well ahead and also improved his king’s position. White would probably still expect a draw after placing his rook on e2 to prevent the black king’s appearance in the center.

5 Kg2 a5? (correct was 5…Ra3 followed by …Kf7)

9-230

W?



6 Rf2?

The same passive policy (by the way, the game was annotated by many, yet no one revealed the errors that were committed by the players at this stage). Again, White should have taken the opportunity to activate his rook: 6 Rb7! Rc2+ 7 Kg1 R×a2 8 Ra7.

Grandmaster Krogius evaluates the resulting position as lost for White "because of the bad position of White's pawns, and especially that of his king – cut off on the first rank." But what about Black's king? He will stay offside forever, because …f6-f5 can be always met with Ra6+ followed by gf. White's rook stays on a7, the king calmly waits on g1-h1; Black pushes his pawn ahead, it comes to a3, what then?

As grandmaster Vugar Gashimov has correctly noted, the same idea, albeit in somewhat more complicated form, could have arisen earlier. For example, after 3…a6, 4 Rc7! leads to a draw: 4…R×a2+ 5 Kf1! (less accurate is 5 Kg1 Re2! 6 Rc6 a5 and on 7 Rc5 there is 7…Re5) 5…Rb2 6 Rc6! a5 Rc5! a4 8 Ra5 Rb4 (on 8…Ra2 the same response follows) 9 Ra7! Rf4 10 Kf2 f5 (how else to strengthen the position?) 11 Ra6+ Kf7 12 gf=.

6…Ra3

6…Rc4 was more accurate, as now the pawn sacrifice 7 f4!? gf 8 R×f4 deserved serious consideration.

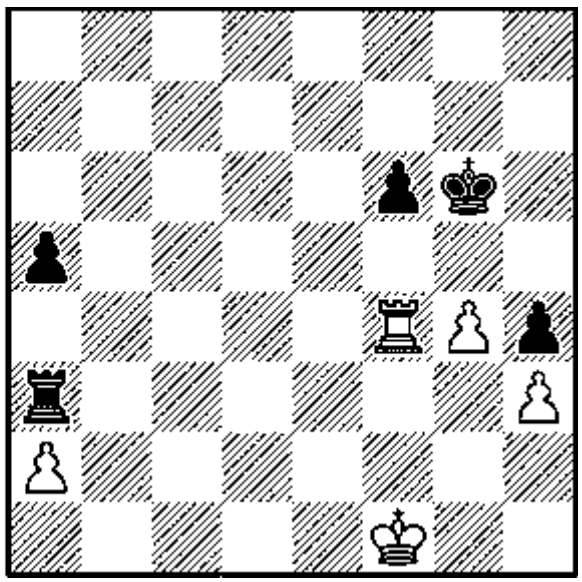
7 Kf1 Kf7?!

Black probably rejected 7…f5 because of 8 f4!. A good idea could be 7…Ra4!?, preventing the opponent's activity on the kingside, although White could then cut off the black king by means of 8 Kg2 Kf7 9 Re2.

8 f4! gf 9 R×f4 (△ 10 g5) **9…Kg6**

9-231

W?

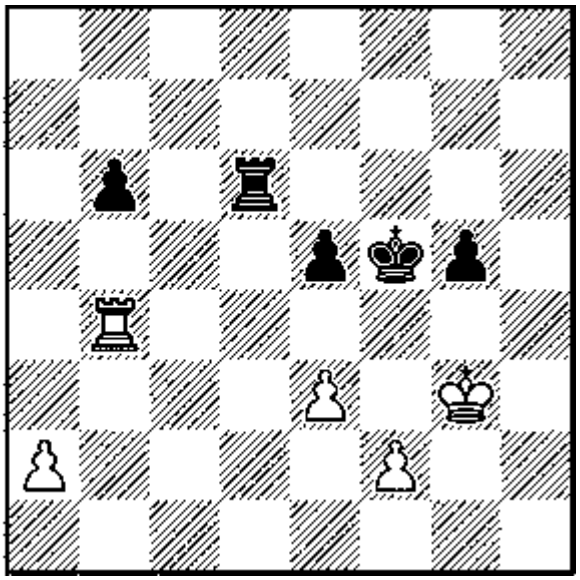


10 Rf2?

White made this passive move and resigned, realizing that his position is absolutely hopeless after 10…R×h3. Meanwhile he could hold after 10 Rf5! He has no time for capturing the h-pawn: 10…R×a2 11 Rh5? a4 12 R×h4 a3 13 Rh8 Rb2–+; 12 Ra5 Kf7! 13 Ra6 a3 is also hopeless. But he can employ the Vancura idea (see diagram 9-43): 11 Kg1! a4 12 Rf4!. Even if Black's king manages to leave the kingside by means of zugzwang: 12…Ra3 13 Kh2 Kg7!⊙ (13…Kf7 14 g5) 14 Rb4 (14 Kg2? Rg3+ and 15…a3) 14…Kf7 15 Re4 Kf8!⊙ 16 Rf4 Ke7, no more progress can be made: the king has no refuge from checks from the side near the passed pawn, therefore the rook cannot abandon the a-file.

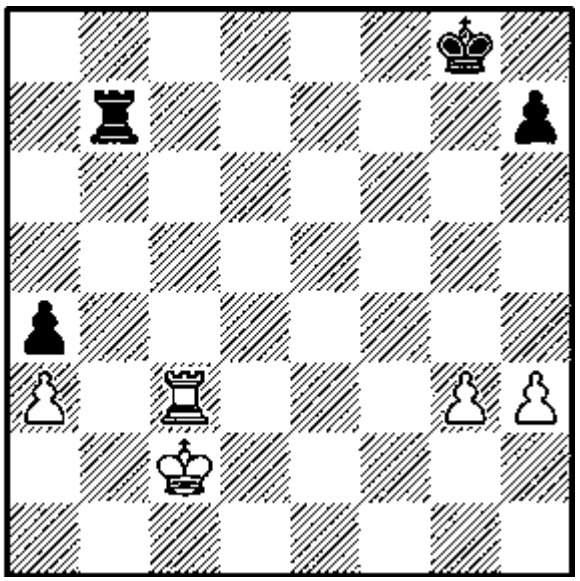
Exercises

9-232



9/24
B?

9-233



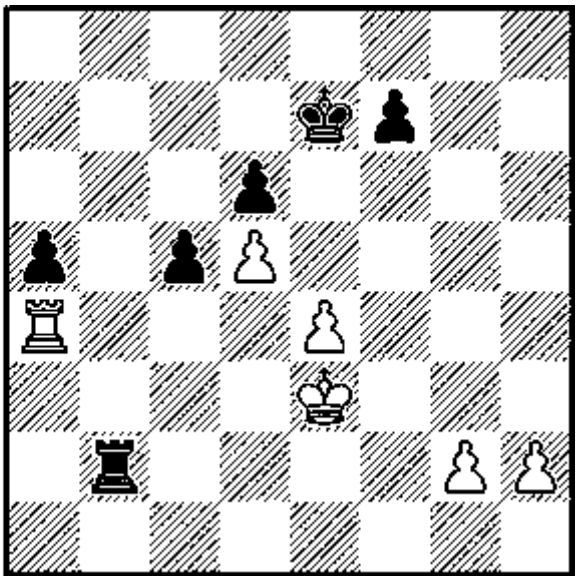
9/25
B?

The King's Activity

The importance of an active king's position does not require detailed explanations. A few practical examples are enough.

Flear – Legky
Le Touquet 1991

9-234



B?

1…Kf6!

King activity is more important than material gain! 1…Rb5? 2 Kf4 Kf6 3 g4 is too passive. 1…R×g2? 2 R×a5 R×h2 3 Ra7+ Kf6 4 Rd7 Ke5 5 Re7+ leads to an immediate draw.

2 R×a5

As Legky wrote, White could deny the king access to e5 by 2 Kf4!! Rf2+ 3 Ke3! (3 Kg3? Rf1! △ 4…Ke5) 3…R×g2 4 R×a5, and after 4…Ke5 4 Ra7 Black, in contrast to the game continuation, has no check along the third rank. If 4…R×h2, then 5 Ra7 Rh6 6 Rd7 Kg7 7 e5!? de 8 Ke4, and White's activity compensates for the two missing pawns.

2…Ke5! 3 Ra7?!

Oleg Chebotarev suggested a safer defense, 3 Ra4!. As before, 3…R×g2 is useless because of 4 Ra7, while if Black tries the temporizing 3…f6, then 4 g3.

3…Rb3+ 4 Kf2 K×e4 5 R×f7

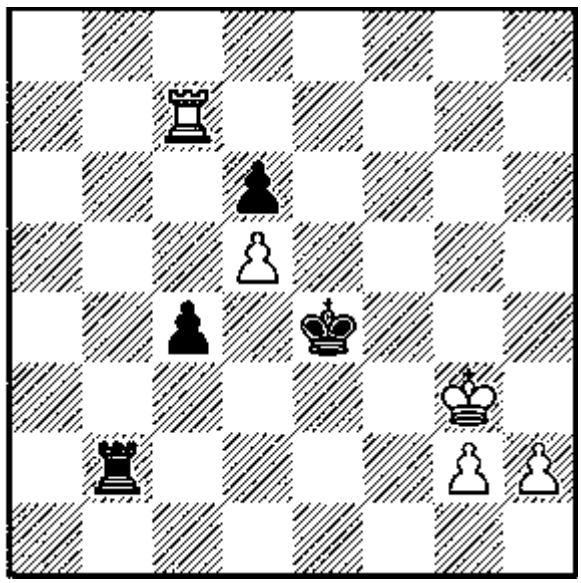
5 h4 loses to 5…Rb2+ 6 Kg3 c4 7 h5 c3 8 Rc7 Kd3! 9 h6 c2 10 h7 Rb8. However, 5 g4!? f6 6 Rf7 deserved attention, as after 6…Rb2+ 7 Kg3 the king does not stand in the way of his pawn.

5…Rb2+ 6 Kg3 c4!

There is no sense in capturing the d5-pawn; the rapid advance of his own passed pawn is more important.

7 Rc7

9-235



B

7…Kd3?! 8 h4?

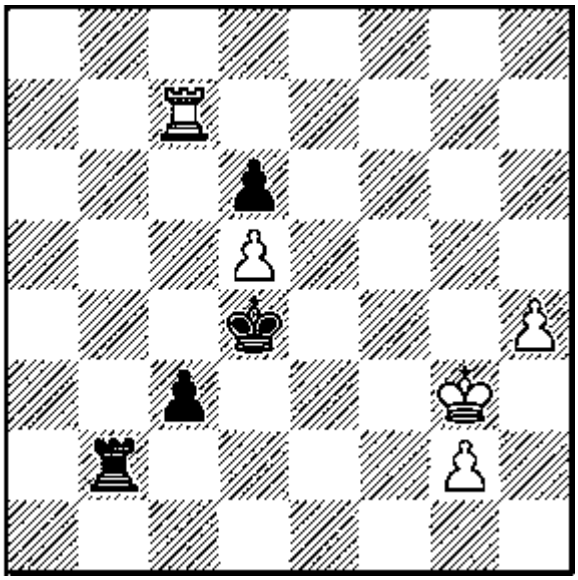
The decisive error. 8 Rc6! was necessary. Legky continues the line with 8…c3 9 R×d6 Rb5! 10 Rc6 R×d5 11 h4 c2 12 Kh3 Rd4 13 R×c2 K×c2∓. As a matter of fact, the final position is won because of the poor position of the white king. However, Flear could achieve a draw by sending his

king ahead: 12 R×c2! K×c2 13 Kf4 (or 13 Kg4 Kd3 14 h5 Ke4 15 h6) 13…Kd3 13 g4.

Black should have played 7…Kd4!! on his previous move, in order to protect indirectly his d6-pawn (8 Rc6? c3 9 R×d6 c2 10 Rc6 Rb3+ and 11…Rc3). 8 h4 c3

9-236

W?



After 9 h5 Kd3! (9…c2? is not precise, White saves himself by an immediate activation of his king: 10 Kf4! Kd3 11 Kf5) 10 h6 (10 Kf4 R×g2 11 Kf5 Re2! 12 h6 c2 13 h7 Rh2 14 Kg6 Kd2–+) 10…c2 11 Kf4 Rb1 12 g4 (12 h7 Rh1 13 g4 R×h7) 12…c1Q 13 R×c1 R×c1 14 Kf5 Kd4 15 g5 Rh1! 16 Kg6 (16 Ke6 Kc5–+) 16…Ke5!o, and the black king arrives just in time!

But Müller indicated that White could hold this endgame by means of 9 Kf3!! (instead of 9 h5) 9…c2 (9…Kd3 10 g4 c2 11 g5=) 10 Kf4! Kd3 11 Kf5, for example, 11…Rb5 12 R×c2 K×c2 13 Ke6 Kd3 14 g4 Ke4 15 g5 R×d5 16 g6 Re5+ 17 Kf6 Rf5+ 18 Ke6=.

Is this not a bizarre endgame? In a sharp position, White twice had a good reason for granting a tempo to his opponent (2 Kf4!! and 9 Kf3!!), while Black's best try also involved a loss of a tempo (7…Kd4!!).

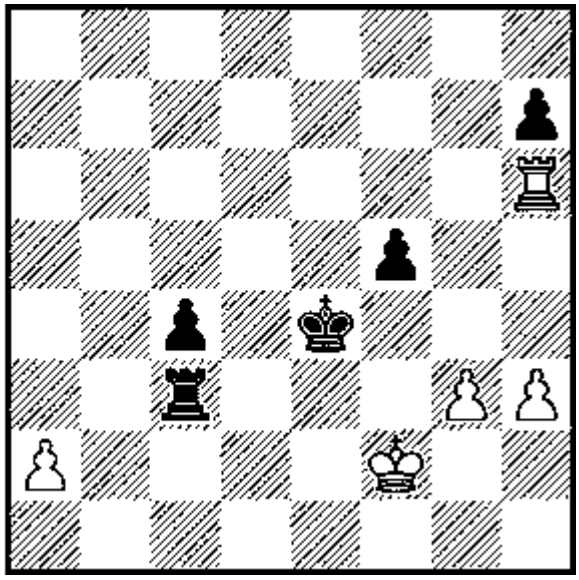
8…c3–+ **9 h5 c2 10 h6 Rb1 11 Kf4** (11 h7 Rh1 12 Kg4 R×h7–+) **11…c1Q+ 12 R×c1 R×c1 13 g4 Rf1+ 14 Kg5 Ke4 15 Kg6 Rg1** White resigned.

Tragicomedies

Bogatyrchuk – Mazel
USSR ch, Moscow 1931

9-237

W?



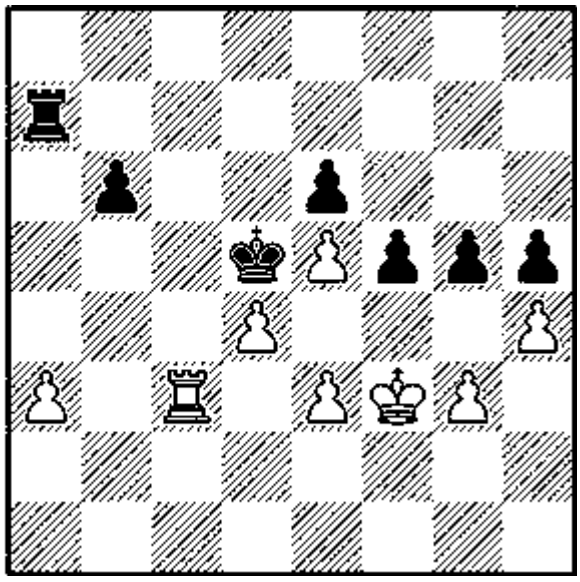
1 R×h7?

A grave positional error that allows the white king to be driven to the back rank. After 1 Rh4+! Kd3 2 R×h7, the game would be drawn (2…Rc2+ can be met with 3 Kf3).

1…Rc2+ 2 Ke1 R×a2 3 Re7+ Kd3 4 Rd7+ Kc2 5 Rd5? (5 Ke2!) **5…c3 6 R×f5 Kb1! 7 Rf1 Rh2** White resigned.

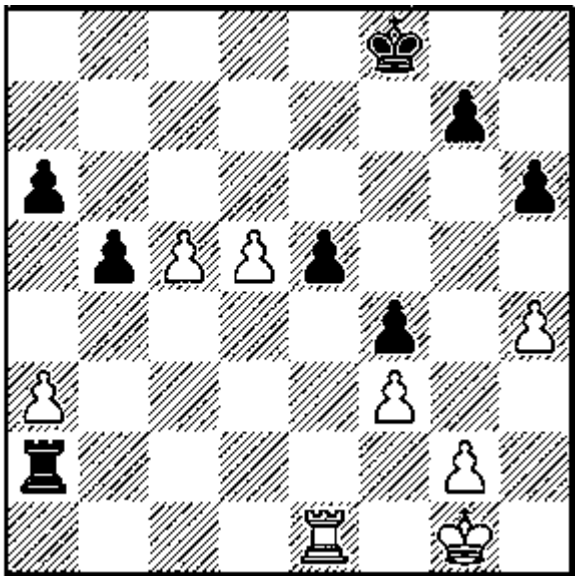
Exercises

9-238



9/26
B?

9-239



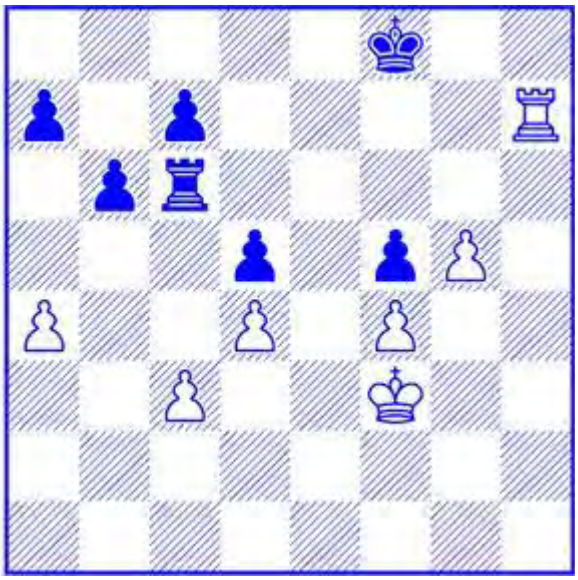
9/27
B?

The King on the Edge

A king on the edge of the board is unfavorably placed and not only because the king is far away from the focal point of events. Quite often the opponent creates mate threats by sending his own king to attack. This strategy can enable him to bring home an advantage or save a difficult position.

Capablanca – Tartakower
New York 1924

9-240



W?

1 Kg3!

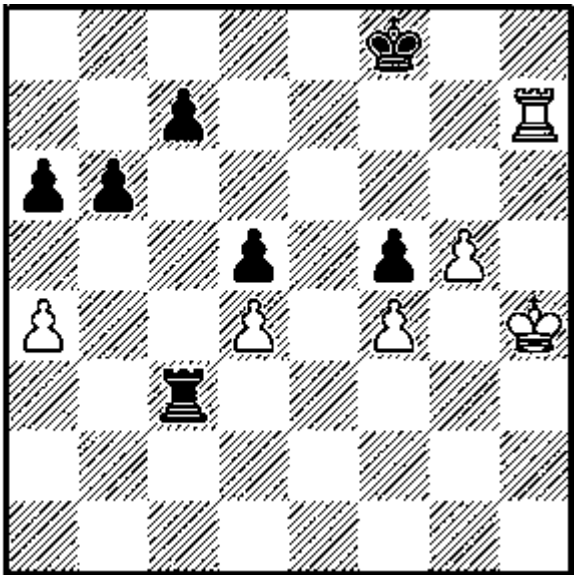
White can exploit the poor position of the black king only by implementing Nimzovitch's principle of the collective advance. The white king must take part in the attack, and one should not begrudge a few pawns for this purpose. An unclear position arises after the primitive 1 Rd7? R×c3+ 2 Ke2 Ra3 3 R×d5 R×a4 4 R×f5+ Kg7.

1…R×c3+ 2 Kh4 Rf3?

This simplifies White's task. Nor is 2…Rc1 any better: 3 Kh5! c5 (3…Rh1+ 4 Kg6) 4 Rd7! cd (4…c4 5 Kg6) 5 R×d5 Rd1 6 Kg6 d3 7 Kf6 Ke8 8 g6 (Fine).

Goldin suggested the toughest defense, which is 2…a6! There has been a lively analytical discussion on this subject in Russian chess magazines.

9-241



W?

White cannot show the win on 3 Rd7?! Rf3 4 g6 R×f4+ 5 Kg5 Re4 or 3 g6?! b5 4 ab ab 5 Kg5 b4 6 Rf7+! Kg8! Nor could a win be found after 3 Kh5 b5 4 a5 Rc6 5 g6 b4 6 Kh6 b3 7 Rh8+ Ke7 8 Rb8 Rc2!, or 4 ab ab 5 Kg6 Kg8! (△ …Rc6+) 6 Rh1 b4 7 K×f5 Kg7!

Igor Zaitsev found the key to this position: 3 Kh5! b5 4 Kg6!! Kg8 (nor does 4…ba 5 K×f5 a3 6 Rh6 save him) 5 Rg7+! Kf8 6 Rf7+ Kg8 7 Rf6!, with the unstoppable threat of 8 R×a6. Had White exchanged pawns earlier on b5, his opponent could have parried the threat by 8…b4 9 Ra6 Ra3! 10 Rc6 Rc3=.

3 g6! R×f4+ 4 Kg5 Re4 (4…R×d4 5 Kf6 is also hopeless)

9-242

W?

5 Kf6! (the f5-pawn is useful for the time being – it serves as an umbrella)

5…Kg8 6 Rg7+!

Good endgame technique: prior to capturing the pawn, it is useful to worsen the position of the black king just a little.

6…Kh8 7 R×c7 Re8 8 K×f5!

It is time to eliminate the f5-pawn, otherwise it could move ahead (8 Kf7 Rd8 △ …f4⇄). As we know, a knight pawn, unlike a bishop pawn, cannot be promoted against a passive defense with a rook on the back rank.

8…Re4 9 Kf6 Rf4+ 10 Ke5 Rg4 11 g7+!

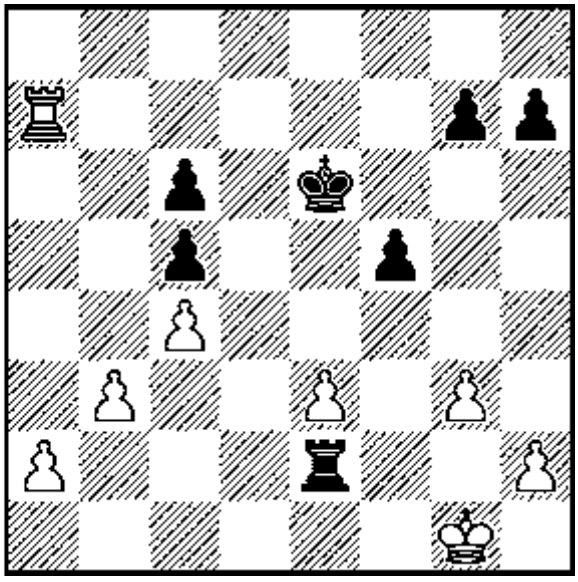
This is where the zwischenschach on move six tells: White brings his pawn under the protection of the rook with a tempo (11…R×g7 12 R×g7 K×g7 13 K×d5+–).

11…Kg8 12 R×a7 Rg1 13 K×d5 Rc1 14 Kd6 Rc2 15 d5 Rc1 16 Rc7 Ra1 17 Kc6 R×a4 18 d6 Black resigned.

Lilienthal – Smyslov

Leningrad/Moscow 1941

9-243



B

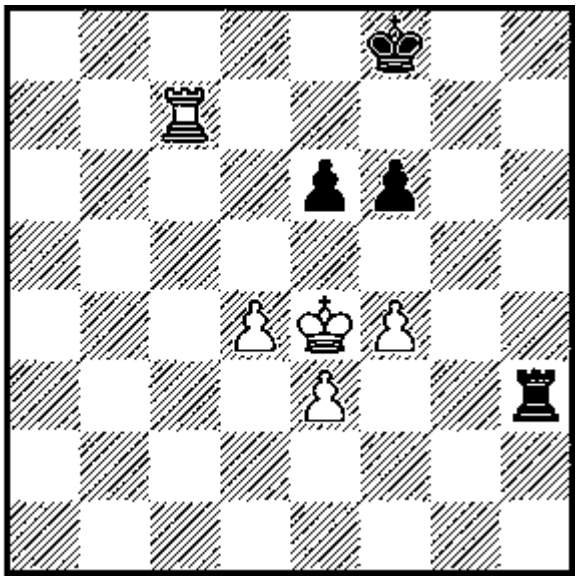
Almost all Black's pawns are vulnerable but Smyslov easily compensates for the missing material by means of an attack against the white king.

1…g5! 2 R×h7 R×a2 3 Rh6+ Ke5 4 R×c6 Ke4 5 R×c5 f4! (preparing an umbrella against checks along the f-file) **6 ef Kf3 7 h3 Ra1+** Draw.

White has four (!) extra pawns in the final position.

Gelfand – Wang Hao

London 2012



Black is not threatened by anything. He can calmly mark time, for example, 1…Ke8 or 1…Rh5.

1…f5+? 2 Ke5 R×e3+ 3 Kf6

But now there is trouble. The unfortunate position of the king, trapped against the edge of the board, leads to the inevitable loss of the e6-pawn.

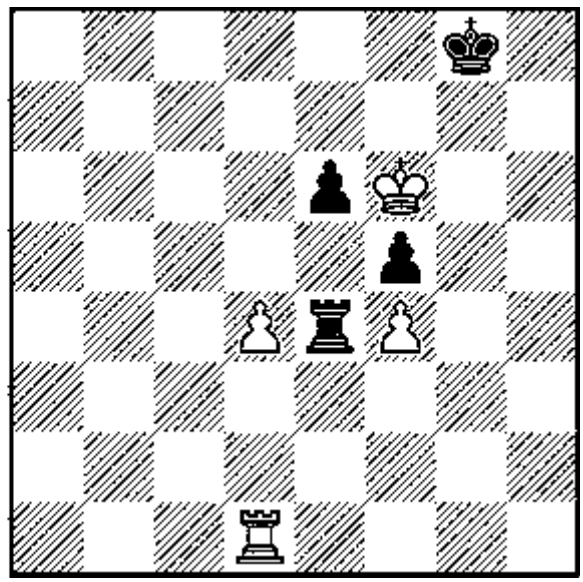
3…Kg8 (3…Ke8 4 Re7+ Kd8 5 R×e6+–) **4 Rg7+**

4 Rc8+ Kh7 5 Kf7 Ra3 (5…Re1 6 Rc3 Rh1 7 K×e6) 6 K×e6 won easily.

4…Kf8 5 Rh7 Kg8 6 Rh1?

It was necessary to return to the aforementioned plan by playing 6 Rg7+! Kf8 7 Ra7.

6…Re4 7 Rd1

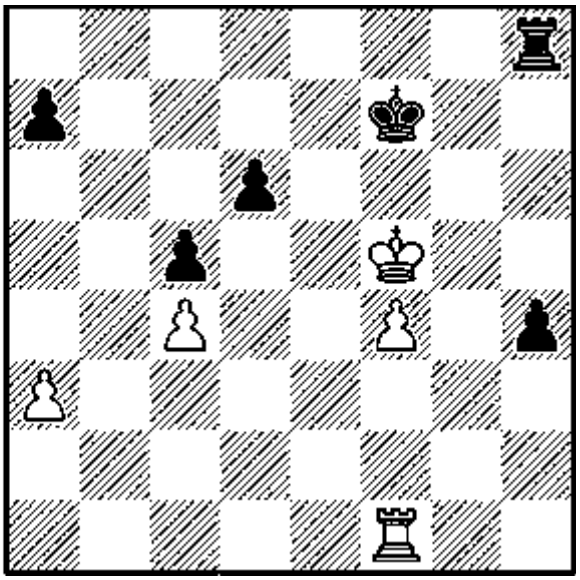


The position is drawn, both after 7…R×f4, and the waiting move 7…Kf8. But then there occurred an incomprehensible blunder – the Chinese grandmaster again forgot about the dangers of leaving his king on the back rank.

7…Kh7?? 8 Kf7 Black resigned.

Exercises

9-246



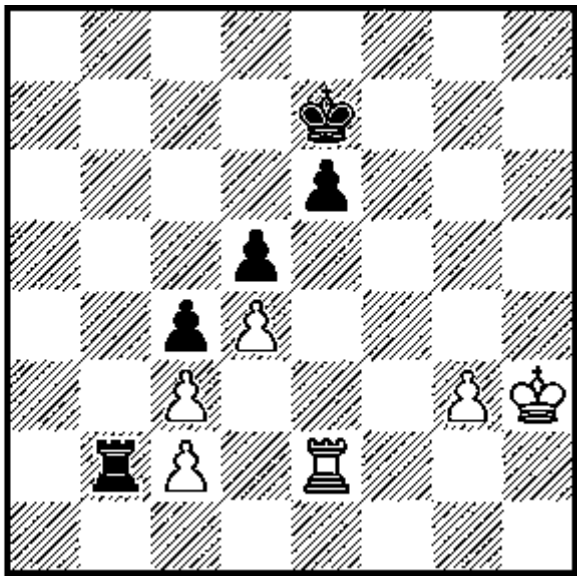
9/28
W?

Cutting the King Off

An important technique in rook-and-pawn endings is cutting the hostile king off from strategically important areas. From his own pawns that need protection, from our pawns that he could attack, from our passed pawn that could otherwise be stopped by him, or from his passed pawn that could be assisted by the king.

Janetschek – U. Geller
Skopje ol 1972

9-247



W?

1 Rf2!

Cutting the king off from the passed pawn, White considerably aggravates the threat of its advance.

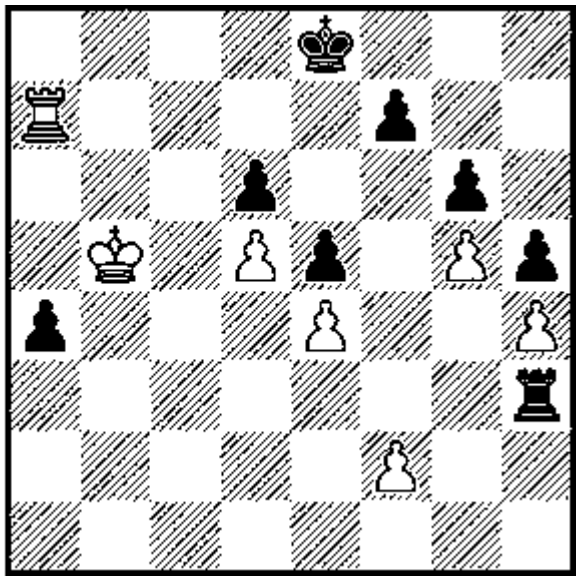
1…Ra2?

Black wants to snap up one of White's queenside pawns but ignores his fundamental problem. Only a defense by frontal checks could give him chances for salvation: 1…Rb8! 2 g4 Rh8+ 3 Kg3 Rg8. To achieve progress, White should have played Rh2, but then the black king comes to the f-file. Only then the rook might go ahead against White's pawns.

2 g4 Ra3 3 Kh4 R×c3 4 g5 Re3 5 g6 Re1 6 Rf7+ Kd6 7 g7 Rg1 8 Kh5 Rg2 9 c3 Rg3 10 Ra7 Kc6 11 Kh6 Kd6 12 Ra8 Rh3+ 13 Kg6 Rg3+ 14 Kf7 Rf3+ 15 Ke8 Rg3 16 Ra6+ Black resigned.

Savon – Zheliandinov
Riga 1964

9-248



B?

The actual continuation was 1…R×h4? 2 Kc6 R×e4 3 K×d6 Kf8 4 Ra8+ Kg7 5 Ke7+– (the d-pawn will cost Black a rook) 5…Rd4 6 d6 e4 (6…h4 7 d7 h3 8 d8Q R×d8 9 R×d8 h2 10 Rd1 a3 11 Rh1 a2 12 f3⊙ Kg8 13 Kf6+–) 7 d7 e3 8 fe Re4+ 9 Kd6 R×e3 10 d8Q Rd3+ 11 Ke5 Black resigned.

Black should have cut the king off from the d6-pawn.

1…Rc3! 2 R×a4 Rc5+

The pawn endgame that arises after 2…Kd7 3 Ra7+ Rc7? (3…Ke8!) 4 R×c7+ K×c7 5 Ka6 is lost. This evaluation is not quite obvious because Black has a chance for a pawn breakthrough: …f7-f6 and, after g5xf6, …g6-g5. However, White wins the race that happens thereafter (doubters may check this fact for themselves).

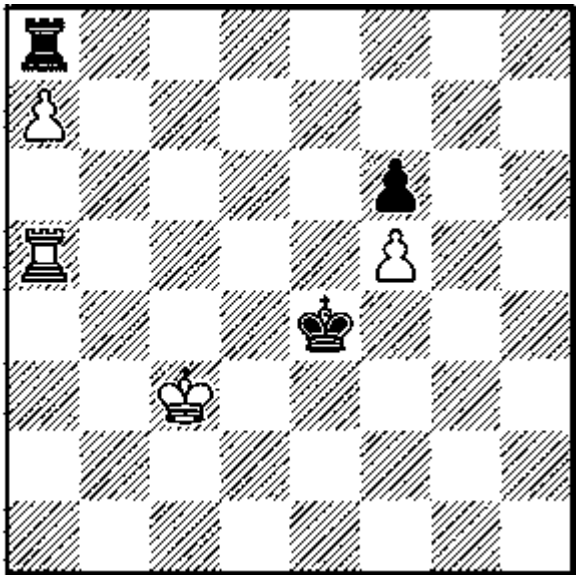
But there is no sense in calculating sharp lines because we have a fortress after this check. The white king cannot cross the c-file.

3 Kb6 Rc1 4 Ra8+ Kd7 5 Ra7+ Ke8 6 Rc7 Ra1! 7 Kc6 Ra6+ 8 Kb7 Ra1=.

Tragicomedies

Timoshchenko – K. Grigorian
USSR ch(1), Frunze 1979

9-249



B

One single move was actually made in the game:

1…Ke3? 2 Ra4!

Black resigned. Now when his king is cut off from the f5-pawn, he will be inevitably put into zugzwang: 2…Kf3 3 Kd3 Kg3 4 Ke3⊙ Re8+ (4…Kh3 5 Kf3⊙) 5 Kd4 Ra8 6 Kc5+–.

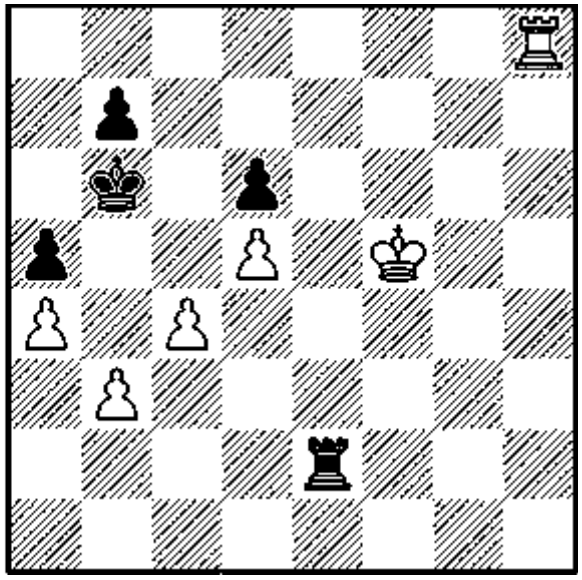
The best defense is 1…Kf4 2 Kd4 Kg4. In *Chess Informant*, Timoshchenko evaluated the position that arises as drawn, despite the extreme passivity of the black rook. 3 Ke4 is met with 3…Re8+!, and White does not have 4 Kd5?? in view of 4…Re5+, while an attempt to cross the fifth rank with the king loses the f5-pawn: 3 Kd5 K×f5 4 Kc6+ Ke4 5 Kb7 R×a7+ 6 R×a7 f5=.

However one can easily improve this line for White. After the capture on f5, it is enough to win if the black king is temporarily cut off from the approach to the lower half of the board: 4 Ra4! (instead of 4 Kc6+?) 4…Kg5 5 Kc6 f5 6 Kb7 Re8 7 a8Q R×a8 8 R×a8+–.

Exercises

9-250

9/29
B?



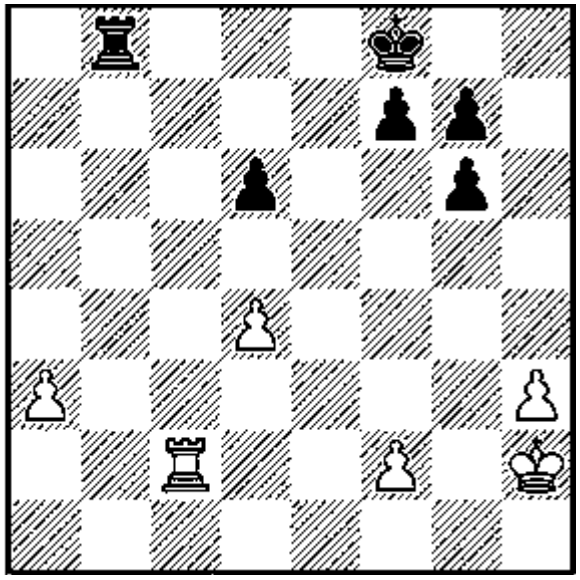
Akiba Rubinstein's Masterpiece

As Tartakower wrote, "Rubinstein is a rook ending of a chess game that was started by God a thousand years ago." I want to conclude the chapter on rook-and-pawn endings with an example from the creative work of the outstanding Polish grandmaster. It is rumored that after the game finished (the final stage of which we shall study) Rubinstein's respected opponent, grandmaster Spielmann, shouted: "Akiba, if you lived in the Middle Ages you would have been burned at the stake: what you do in rook endgames can only be called witchcraft!"

Spielmann – Rubinstein
St. Petersburg 1909

9-251

B



A positional disadvantage that occurs often is an abundance of "pawn islands." White has four islands against Black's two; this means that White has more vulnerable pawns that cannot

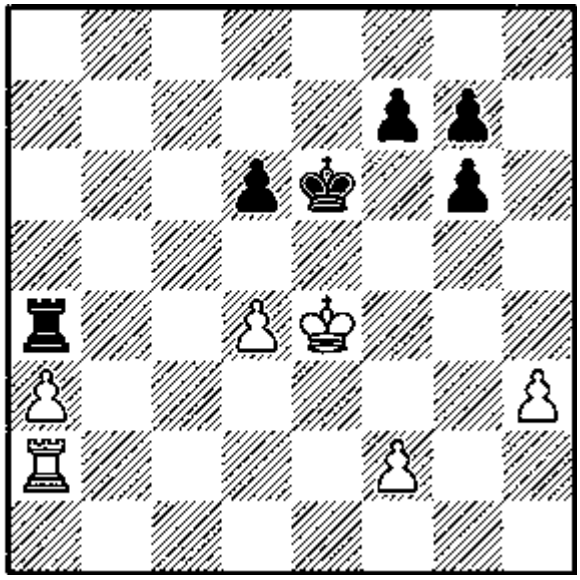
protect each other. Therefore his position is inferior.

1…Ra8!

The first stage of Black's plan is to attack White's pawns so that the white rook will be chained to their protection. Chasing after material gain with 1…Rb3? would have been a grave error, because after 2 Ra2 Rd3 3 a4 R×d4 4 a5 Rc4 5 a6, the white rook is actively placed behind a passed pawn while the black rook must stand passively on a8.

2 Rc3

Spielmann thinks that the rook stands even worse on a2 and explains this judgment with the line 2 Ra2 Ra4 3 Kg3 Ke7 (3…R×d4? 4 a4∞) 4 Kf3 Ke6 5 Ke4



5…d5+ 6 Ke3 Kf5. However, the final position of this line is far from clear. And secondly, instead of 6 Ke3, White can play 6 Kd3!? Kf5 (6…Kd6 7 Kc3 Kc6 8 Kd3 Kb5 9 Rb2+) 7 Kc3 Ke4 8 Re2+. As we can see, the rook behind the pawn has some hidden potency, although it is currently passive. It chains the black rook; for as soon as the black rook leaves a4, the white rook supports the advance of the a-pawn.

Levenfish and Smyslov also analyze 5…g5!? (instead of 5…d5+). This continuation is more dangerous, but their line shows that White maintains sufficient defensive resources: 6 Ra1 f6 7 Ra2 f5+ 8 Kd3 Kd5 9 Kc3 Rc4+ 10 Kb3 R×d4 11 a4 Rd3+ (11…Kc6 12 a5 Kb7 13 a6+ Ka7 14 Ra5 Rf4 15 Rd5 R×f2 16 R×d6 Rf3+ 17 Kc4 R×h3 18 Rg6 g4 19 Kb5 Rb3+ 20 Ka5=) 12 Kb4 R×h3 13 a5 Rh8 14 a6 Ke4 15 a7 Ra8 16 Kb5 Kf3 17 Kb6=.

However the position of the rook on the third rank has its own virtues, but Spielmann fails to exploit them.

2…Ra4 3 Rd3 Ke7

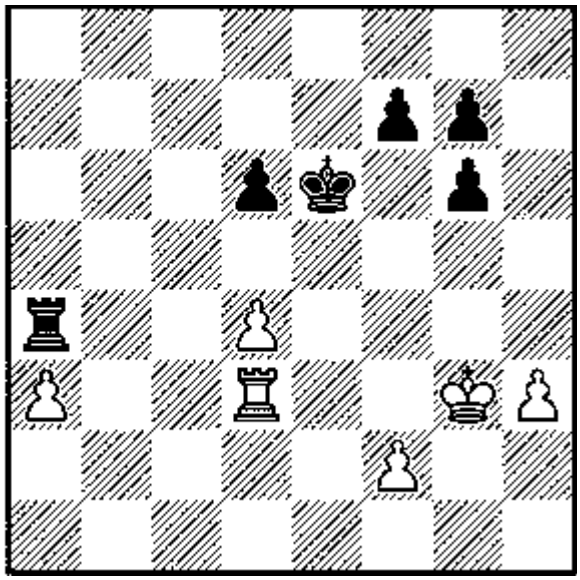
The second stage: the king goes to the center.

4 Kg3

4 d5 is met with 4…g5! (4…Kf6 5 Rf3+) 5 Kg2 Kf6 6 Rf3+ Kg6 (△ Rd4) 7 Rd3 f6! △ …Kf5.

4…Ke6

9-253



B

5 Kf3?

In my opinion this is an obvious positional error that was somehow left unnoticed by the annotators. Letting the black king pass to d5, White condemns himself to a passive defense that, as we know, forebodes gloom in rook-and-pawn endings. He could get excellent chances for a draw by playing 5 Re3+! Kd7 (5…Kd5 6 Re7), and now either 6 Rf3!? f6 7 d5 Rd4 8 Rb3 or 6 Rd3 Kc6 7 Rc3+! Kd5 8 Rc7 R×a3+ 9 Kg2 Ke6 10 d5+ Kf6 11 Rd7 Ra6 12 h4.

5…Kd5 6 Ke2?!

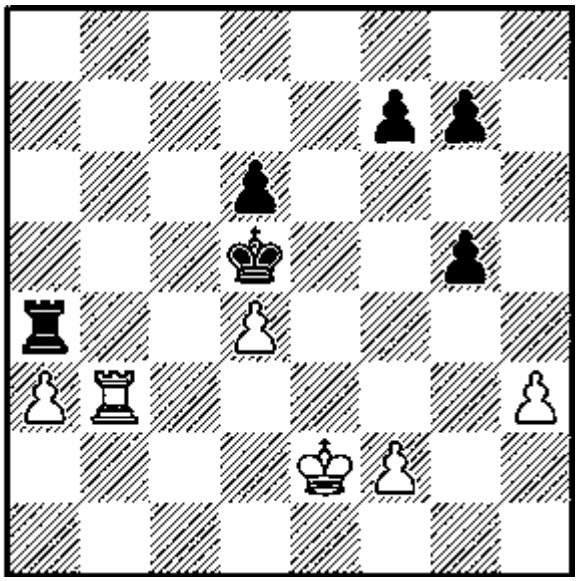
Another inaccuracy. A good idea was to restrain Black's pawns on the kingside by means of 6 h4!. It is worth mentioning that here, as well as later on, White is not afraid of 6…R×d4, because he has a distant passed pawn in the ensuing pawn endgame after 7 Ke3.

6…g5!

The third stage of the plan: it is important to improve the pawn structure on the kingside.

7 Rb3

9-254



B?

7…f6!

7…R×d4? can be met either with 8 Rb5+ or with 8 Rd3. In case of 7…K×d4!? 8 Rb7, White has considerably reduced the number of pawns. Although Kasparov claims the ending after 8…f6! (8…R×a3? 9 R×f7 R×h3 10 R×g7⩲) 9 R×g7 R×a3 10 h4! gh 11 Rg4+ Kc3 12 R×h4 Ra2+ to be won for Black, it is not clear whether his judgment is correct. In addition, Black should take 8 Rg3!? (△ Rg4+) 8…Ra5 9 a4 into account.

Rubinstein's move is safer. 8 Rb7 can be met with 8…R×a3 9 R×g7 R×h3 (9…K×d4 brings us to the above-mentioned line) 10 Rg6 (10 Rf7 Ke6! 11 Rf8 f5 12 Re8+ Kd5 13 Rf8 Ke4 △ …g4, …Rf3–+) 10…Ke6 11 Rg8 Rh4 12 Ke3 Kd5. This position, as Kasparov has proven, is winning,

and here I agree with him. One who fights for a win should avoid pawn exchanges; in this line, an extra pawn pair remains on the board compared with the 7…K×d4 line.

8 Ke3 Kc4 9 Rd3

9 Rb7 R×a3+ 10 Ke4 d5+ 11 Kf5 R×h3 12 R×g7 Rf3+ is hopeless.

9…d5

Black has improved his pawn structure and optimally placed his king. Now it is time for the rook. It has completed its mission on a4 and may find a new application for its talents.

10 Kd2 Ra8 11 Kc2

11 Ke2? Rb8 12 Kd2 Rb2+ 13 Ke3 R×f2–+ (or 13…Ra2⊙).

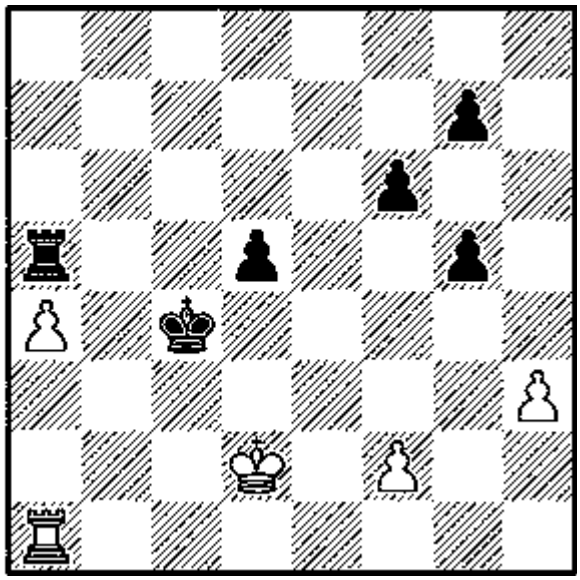
11…Ra7! 12 Kd2 Re7⊙ 13 Rc3+!

The last chance to display activity. A continued passive policy would have led to an inglorious demise: 13 Kc2 Re2+ 14 Rd2 R×d2+ 15 K×d2 Kb3!o, or 13 Re3 R×e3! (13…Rb7!) 14 fe (14 K×e3 Kb3) 14…f5! 15 Kc2 g6⊙ 16 Kd2 (16 Kb2 g4) 16…Kb3–+.

13…K×d4 14 a4! Ra7 15 Ra3 Ra5!

The pawn must be stopped as soon as possible. Black intends to approach it with his king: either simply for winning it or for blocking it and releasing the rook from its passive position.

16 Ra1 Kc4



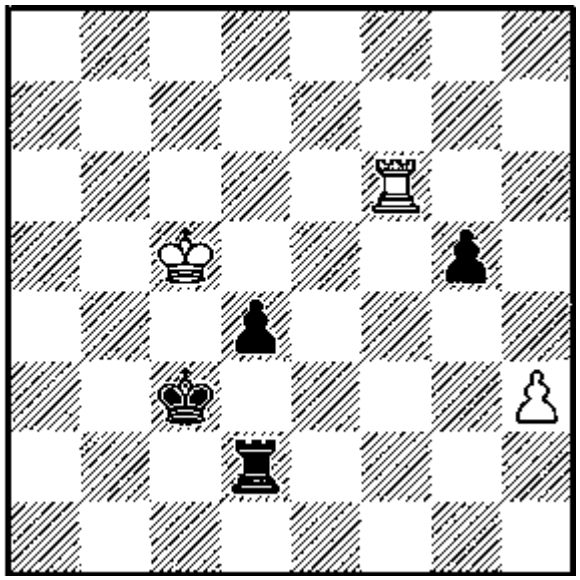
17 Ke3?!

White should have tried 17 Rc1+! Kb4 18 Rb1+! K×a4 19 Kd3 (19 Rb7!?). The position of the black king on the edge could give some practical chances. For example, after 19…Rb5? 20 Ra1+ Kb4 21 Kd4, it would be Black's turn to seek a draw.

Levenfish and Smyslov analyzed 19…Rc5! 20 Kd4 (20 Rb7? Rc4 21 R×g7 Kb5) 20…Rc2 21 Rb7 R×f2 22 R×g7, and concluded that White maintains chances for a draw. Kasparov extended this line in the *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings* with 22…Rd2+! 23 Kc5 Kb3 24 Rg6? (as Alexei Bezgodov correctly noted, the pawn should be attacked from f7, since with the rook on g6, 24…f5! 25 R×g5 d4 26 R×f5 Kc3 wins) 24…Kc3? 25 R×f6 d4 and evaluated the final position as winning.

9-256

W?



He is incorrect: White saves himself with 26 Ra6! d3 27 Ra3+ Kb2 28 Kb4 Rd1 29 Rb3+ (29 Rc3!) 29…Kc2 30 Kc4 d2 31 Rc3+ Kb2 32 Rb3+ Ka2 33 Kc3=, or 26…Kd3 27 Kd5 Ke3 28 Re6+ Kf4 29 Rf6+ Kg3 30 Rg6=. It seems that, in spite of previous errors, Spielmann's position remained tenable.

17…d4+ 18 Kd2 Rf5!

Black's precise 15th move tells: the rook may leave the blockade position. If 19 a5, then 19…R×f2+ 20 Ke1 Rb2! (rather than 20…Rh2? 21 Ra4+ Kb5 22 a6!) 21 a6 Rb8 22 a7 Ra8 23 Kd2 Kc5 24 Kd3 Kb6 25 K×d4 R×a7–+ (Spielmann). However, 25 Rb1+! K×a7 26 K×d4 (Müller) is more stubborn, and Black's win is still not a simple matter.

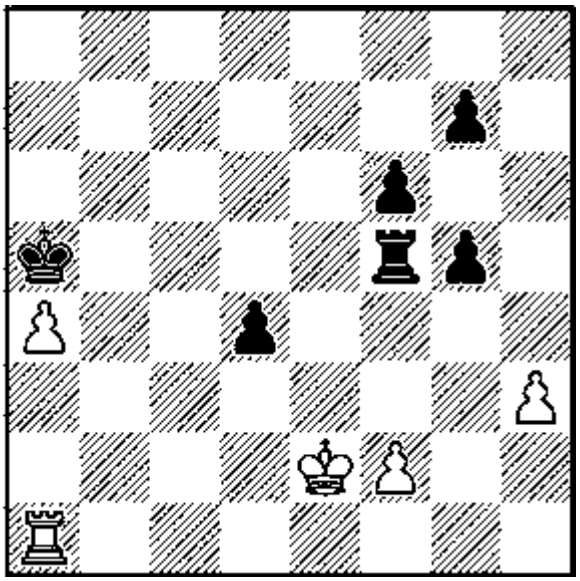
19 Ke1 Kb4!

A typical realignment of pieces: the king will block the passed pawn while the rook will attack White's weak pawns.

20 Ke2 Ka5

9-257

W



21 Ra3

After 21 Rb1 K×a4 22 Rb7, Kasparov suggests 22…d3+ 23 K×d3 R×f2 24 R×g7 Rf3+ 25 Ke4 R×h3–+. This line is erroneous: White holds by means of 25 Kc4! Ka3 (25…Rf4+ 26 Kd5 Kb3 27 Ke6) 26 Rg6 Kb2 27 Kd5 Kc3 28 Ke6. However, 22…g6!o is much stronger.

21…Rf4 22 Ra2

22 Kf1 Rh4 23 Kg2 Kb4! 24 Ra1 d3 25 a5 d2 26 a6 Rh8 27 a7 (27 Kf1 Kc3) 27…Ra8 28 Kf3 R×a7–+ (Spielmann).

22…Rh4 23 Kd3 (23 Ra3 Kb4) **23…R×h3+ 24 K×d4 Rh4+ 25 Kd3**

25 Ke3 R×a4 26 Rd2 Kb6!, and if 27 Rd7 then 27…Ra7.

25…R×a4 26 Re2 (△ 27 Re7) **26…Rf4!**

26…Kb6? is wrong: 27 Re6+! and 28 Re7.

27 Ke3 Kb6 28 Rc2 Kb7!

Accurate to the last! Black prevents the maneuver Rc8-g8 and prepares to cross the c-file with his king after …Ra4-a6-c6.

29 Rc1 Ra4 30 Rh1 Kc6 31 Rh7 Ra7 32 Ke4 Kd6 33 Kf5 g6+! 34 K×g6 R×h7 35 K×h7 Ke5 36 Kg6 g4 White resigned.

Chapter 10

Rook versus Knight

The Lone Knight

In the chapter, “Rook vs. Pawns” (the portion devoted to “Promoting the Pawn to a Knight”), we were introduced to the most important knight-versusrook positions for the practical player. Let’s revisit the basic conclusions:

Usually, a knight draws easily against a rook. But there are exceptions:
When the knight becomes separated from the king, then it can sometimes be trapped;
When the knight is in the corner, it will be lost through zugzwang.

We should also note that the knight stands poorly at g7 (or b7).

Al’Adli
IX Century

10-1
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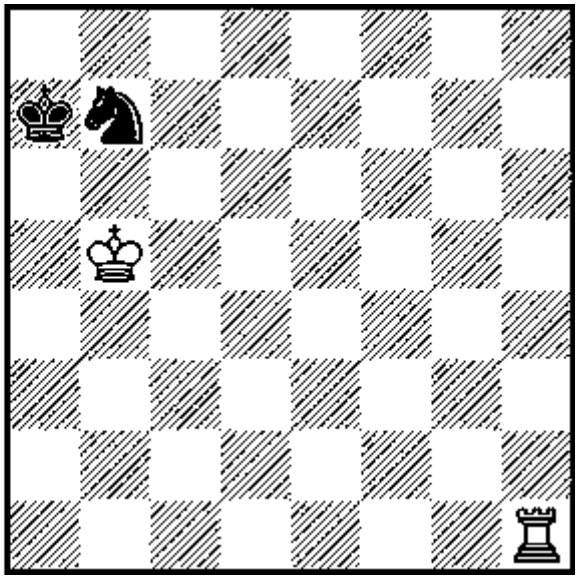

W

Several such endings were discovered in Arab manuscripts from the Middle Ages. At that time, the game was *shatranj*, a game which differed markedly from contemporary chess, although the kings, rooks and knights in fact moved the same as they do today.

White can win in several different ways.

1 Rd1! (Averbakh says this is the simplest) **1…Kb8 2 Ka6! Nc5+**

No better is 2…Kc8 3 Rc1+ Kb8 4 Rb1 Ka8 5 Kb6 Nd6 (5…Kb8 6 Kc6 Ka8 7 Kc7) 6 Rd1+–.

3 Kb6 Na4+ (3…Nb7 4 Rd7 Ka8 5 Rh7) **4 Kc6 Nc3 5 Re1**, and the knight is soon lost.

There are times when a lone knight can hold even against rook and pawn – and not just in those cases where the pawn may be attacked and captured. It can be enough just to prevent the enemy king from reaching its pawn.

Em. Lasker – Ed. Lasker
New York 1924

10-2
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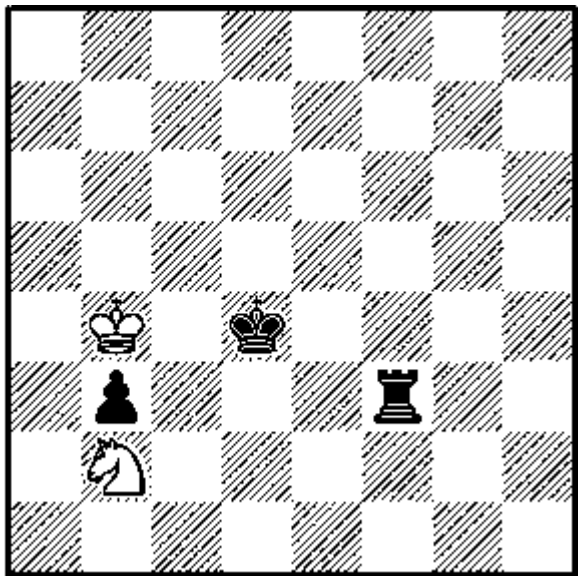


W

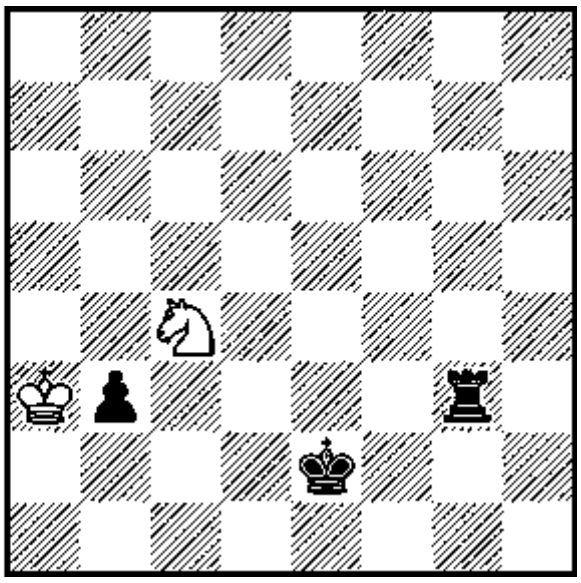
1 Na4 Re3 2 Nb2 Ke4 3 Na4 Kf3

Black can only improve his position if he can get his king over to the pawn. And the only way to get there is by bringing it around the rook. White must take measures against …Ke2-d2-c2–+.

4 Ka3!

Averbakh believes White can also play 4 Nb2 Ke2 5 Nc4 (5 Ka3 Kd2! 6 Nc4+ Kc1–+) 5…Rg3 6 Ka3, followed by 7 Kb2.

10-3



B?

However, Black in fact wins here with 6…Rc3! 7 Na5 (7 Nd6 Kd3 8 Kb2 Rc6!; 7 Ne5 Ke3 8 Kb2 Kd4) 7…Kd3! 8 Kb2 Rc5! 9 N×b3 Rb5 10 Ka2 Kc3.

4…Ke4

If 4…Ke2, then 5 Nc5 Kd2 6 Kb2!, and the pawn goes.

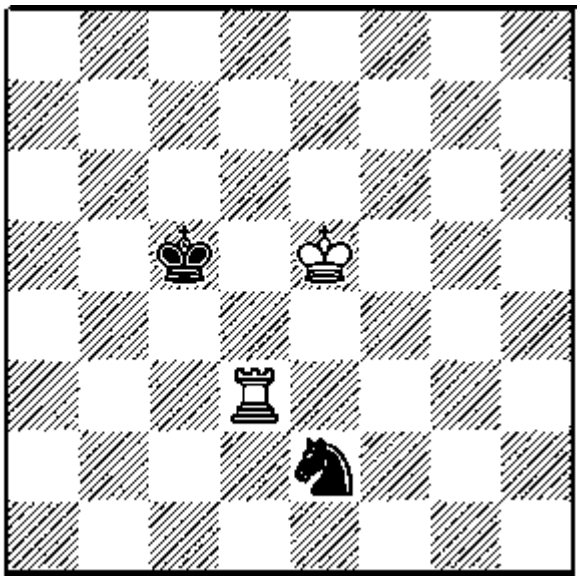
5 Kb4

Of course not 5 Nc5+?? Kd4 6 N×b3+ Kc4–+.

5…Kd4 6 Nb2 Rh3 7 Na4 Kd3 8 K×b3 Kd4+ Draw.

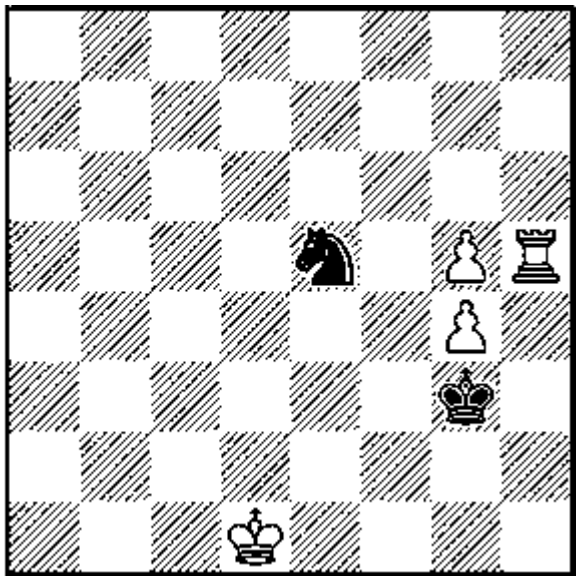
Exercises

10-4



10/1
W?

10-5



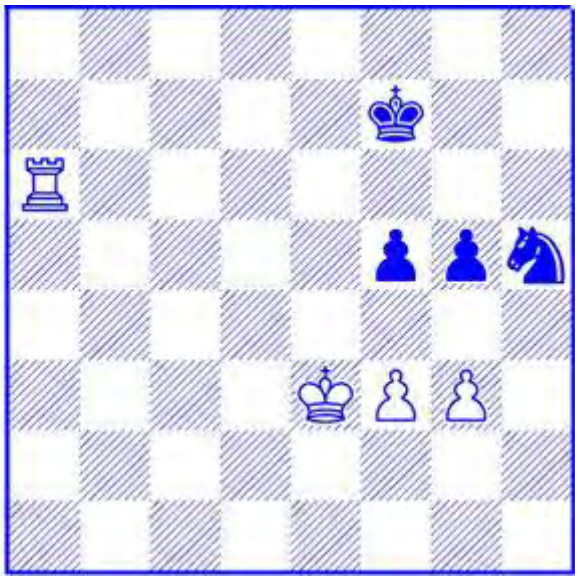
10/2
W?

Rook and Pawn vs. Knight and Pawn

Now let's look at the situation where the pawns are on the same or adjacent files (that is, when neither pawn is passed). In order to win, it will be necessary for the stronger side to attack the pawn with his king – which the weaker side may sometimes be able to prevent by proper piece placement. ***The best position for the knight is one from which it controls the invasion square, while simultaneously attacking the enemy pawn.***

de Firmian – Alburt
USA ch 1983

10-6



1 g4? fg 2 fg Nf6 leads to the ideal defensive setup for Black in which the knight guards important squares, while simultaneously attacking the g4-pawn – an effortless draw.

There are two things to keep in mind in situations of this type. The first is that if the whole position were moved one rank higher, White would win by sacrificing the exchange. And secondly, White would prefer the pawns not to be blocking one another – that is, it would be better to have his pawn on g2, than g4, because then he would not have to defend it.

1 f4! gf+

No better is 1…g4 2 Kd4! N×g3 3 Ke5+–.

2 gf

Black could draw if his knight were at e6 or g6. From h5, although the knight is attacking the pawn, it does not control the invasion squares d4 or e5.

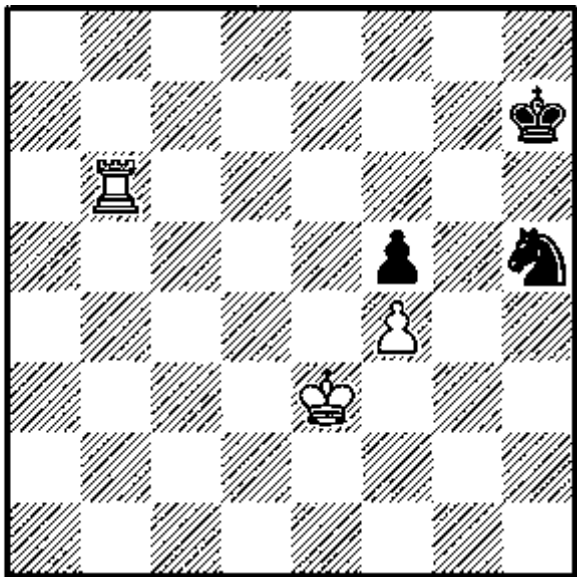
2…Kg7 3 Rb6

The immediate 3 Ra1 Kf6 (intending …Ng7-e6) 4 Rh1 Ng7 5 Rh6+, followed by 6 Kd4+– was also possible.

3…Kh7

After 3…Kf7 4 Rh6 Nf6 5 Kd4 Ng4 6 Ra6 Ke7 7 Kd5 Kf7, we reach a position examined in 1941 by Reuben Fine. His analysis: 8 Kd6 Kf6 9 Ra8 Kf7 10 Rd8⊙ Kf6 11 Rf8+ Kg6 12 Ke6 Ne3 (12…Nh6 13 Rf6+ Kg7 14 R×h6) 13 Rf7⊙ Nc2 14 Rf6+ Kg7 15 K×f5+–.

10-7



4 Rb1

As Müller indicates, the immediate 4 Kd4!? also wins: 4…N×f4 5 Ke5 Ng6+ (after 5…Nh5+ 6 K×f5 Ng7+ we come to the Al'Adli position: see diagram 10-1) 6 Kf6!. For example, 6…f4 7 Rb1 Nf8 8 Rd1!⊙ (rather than the hasty 8 Rh1+ Kg8 9 Rg1+ Kh7 10 Kf7? in view of 10…Kh6! 11

K×f8 Kh5=) 8…f3 (8…Kg8 9 Rd8), and only now 9 Rh1+ Kg8 10 Rg1+ Kh7 11 Kf7+–.

4…Kg6 5 Rh1 Nf6

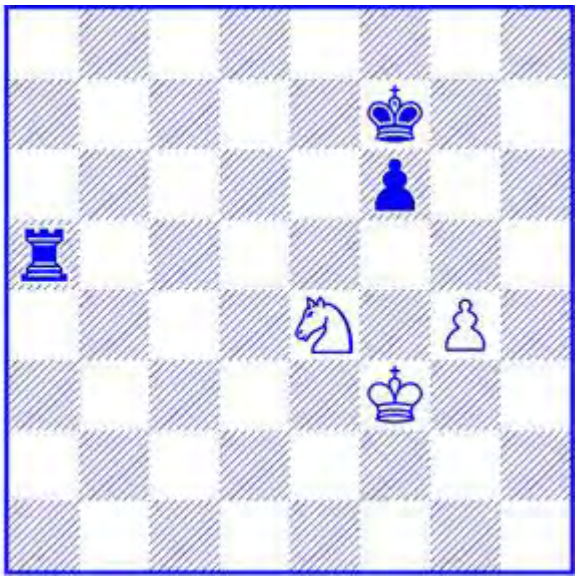
The same reply wins after 5…Ng7 or 5…Kh6.

6 Kd4 Nd7 7 Kd5 Nf6+ 8 Ke5 (8 Ke6!) **8…Nd7+ 9 Ke6 Nf8+?!** (9…Nc5+) **10 Ke7** Black resigned.

Larsen – Tal

Bled, cmsf (7) 1965

10-8



W

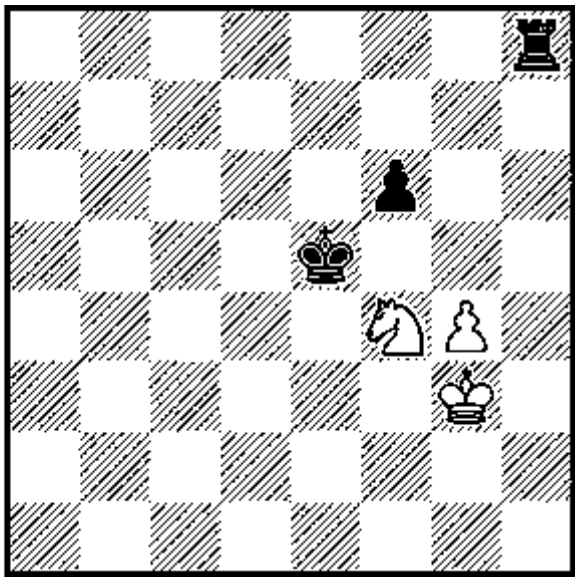
The knight at e4 prevents the king's invasion of the kingside, but it will be vulnerable to attack by …Ke6-e5. In this case, its place is on h5. In his detailed study of these kinds of positions, Averbakh showed that White can obtain a draw.

1 Ng3 Ke6 (1…Kg6 2 Ne4!) **2 Kf4 Ra4+ 3 Kf3 Ke5 4 Nh5! Ra8!? 5 Ke3!**=

Bent Larsen is not afraid of a check along the third rank and brings his king to the center. Here 5 Kg3? would lose after 5…Rh8!, threatening 6…f5.

The best reply is 6 Nf4.

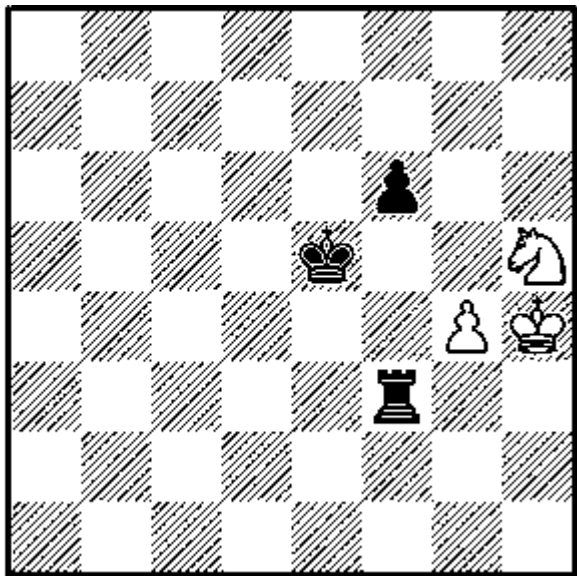
10-9



B

(a) The computer gives the following complicated route to victory: 6…Rh1! 7 Nd3+ Kd4 (with the white king on e3, Black would have to pull back from the center) 8 Nf4 Ke4 9 Nh5 Rf1 10 Kh4 (10 Kg2 Rf3!) 10…Rf2! (but not 10…Rf3? 11 g5!=) 11 Kg3 Rf3+ 12 Kh4 Ke5.

10-10



W

If now 13 g5, then 13…f5 14 g6 Ra3 15 g7 Ra4+! 16 Kg3 (16 Kg5 Rg4+ 17 Kh6 Ke6 and 18…Kf7–+) 16…Rg4+ 17 Kf2!? Ke6 18 Kf3⊙ Kf7 19 Ng3 Kf6 20 Nh5+ Ke6⊙ (Black gives his opponent the move, triangulating with the king) 21 Nf4+ Kf7 22 Nh5 Rg5–+.

Waiting tactics also do not help: 13 Ng3 Ra3 14 Nh5 Rb3 and White is in zugzwang.

On 15 Ng3, decisive is 15…Rb4! 16 Kh5 (16 Nh5 f5–+; 16 Nf5 Kf4 17 Kh5 Rb5!–+ followed by the inevitable 18…R×f5) 16…Rb8 17 Kg6 (17 Kh4 Rh8+ 18 Nh5 f5–+; 17 Nf5 Rg8–+) 17…Rg8+ 18 Kh5 Rh8+ 19 Kg6 Rh4 20 g5 Rg4–+.

And if 15 Ng7, then 15…Rb7 16 Nh5 Rh7 17 Kh3!? f5 18 Kg3 Rh8! 19 Nf4 (19 Kf3 f4–+) 19…Rg8 20 Nd3+ Ke4 21 Nf2+ Ke3 22 Nd1+ Kd3 23 Nf2+ Ke2 24 Kf4 (there is nothing else) 24…K×f2 25 gf Rf8 and White loses because of zugzwang, already familiar to us through Réti's study (diagram 8-10).

(b) In home analysis, Tal studied the natural 6…Ke4 (after 5 Ke3!, this square is not available to the black king). Alas, he was under the mistaken assumption that 7 Nh5! is refuted by 7…f5. Actually, after 8 Nf6+ Ke5 9 Nd7+, White does save himself: 9…Ke6 (9…Kd6 10 Nb6! Rg8 11 Nc4+) 10 Nc5+ Kd5 11 Nd3 Rg8 12 Nf2=. Black therefore has to return with the king, 7…Ke5!, then proceed as in line (a).

Let me give a somewhat refined version of the variation found by Tal. 7 Nh3 Rd8! (in some lines it is useful to deprive the white knight of the d1-square; Tal had considered the slightly less accurate 7…Rc8) 8 Nf2+ Ke3 9 Nh3 (9 g5 f5–+) 9…Rd4 10 Nf2 Rd7! (why the rook takes up position on the seventh and not the eighth rank will soon become clear) 11 Nh3 Rg7 12 Nf2 f5 13 Nd1+ Ke2 14 Nf2 f4+ 15 K×f4 K×f2 16 g5.

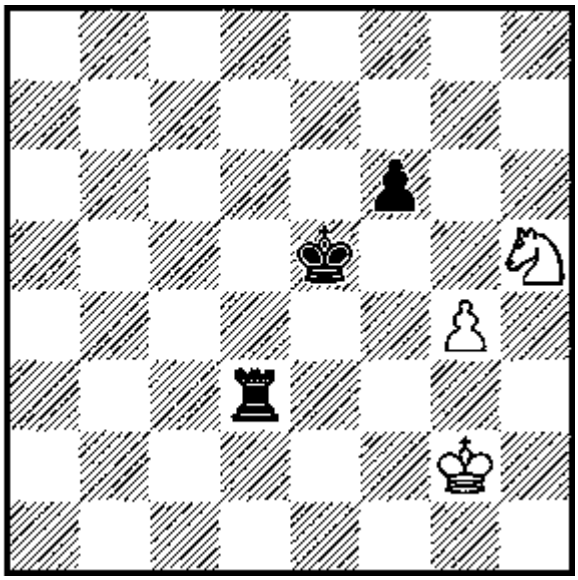
Once again we have the same situation before us as in the Réti study. With the rook on g8 and Black to move, he would be in zugzwang and there would be no win. But here, Black gives the move to his opponent by 16…Rg8!⊙ 17 Kg4 Kg2!⊙ 18 Kf5 Kh3–+ or 18 Kh5 Kf3–+.

Let's return to the game, where Tal, despite lengthy maneuvering, was unable to refute Averbakh's evaluation.

5…Rb8 6 Kf3 Re8 7 Nf4 Kd4 8 Nh5 Re1 9 Kf2 Re4 10 Kf3 Ke5 11 Kg3 Re3+ 12 Kf2 Rb3 13 Kg2 Rb7 14 Kf3 Rb8 15 Ke3 Rg8 16 Kf3 Rh8 17 Ng3 Rh7 18 Ke3 Rh8 19 Kf3 Rh2 20 Ke3 Rb2 21 Nh5 Rb3+ 22 Kf2 Rd3 23 Kg2

10-11

B



23…Ke4 24 N×f6+ Kf4 25 Kf2

After 25 g5??, Black wins either by 25…Rg3+ △ 26…R×g5; or by 25…K×g5 26 Ne4+ Kf4 27 Nf2 Rd2⊙. And 25 Kh2? is a mistake, owing to 25…Rd6 26 g5 Rd8!–+.

25…Rd2+ 26 Ke1 Rd6 27 g5

If it were not for the g-pawn, the knight, cut off from its king, would be lost.

27…Kf3 28 Nh7□ Ke3 29 Nf6 Kf3 30 Nh7 Rd5

Or 30…Rg6 31 Kd2 Rg7 32 Nf6 (32 Nf8) 32…R×g5 33 Kc3=.

31 g6 Rd7 32 Ng5+ Ke3 33 Ne6 Rd2 34 Nf4 Rh2 35 Nd5+ Kf3 36 Kd1 Rg2 37 g7 Draw.

In the next diagram we have the same position as in the previous example, except that it has been shifted slightly. As Averbakh and Bronstein's joint analysis showed, this tiny difference changes the evaluation of the position.

Taimanov – Bronstein
USSR chsf, Leningrad 1946

10-12

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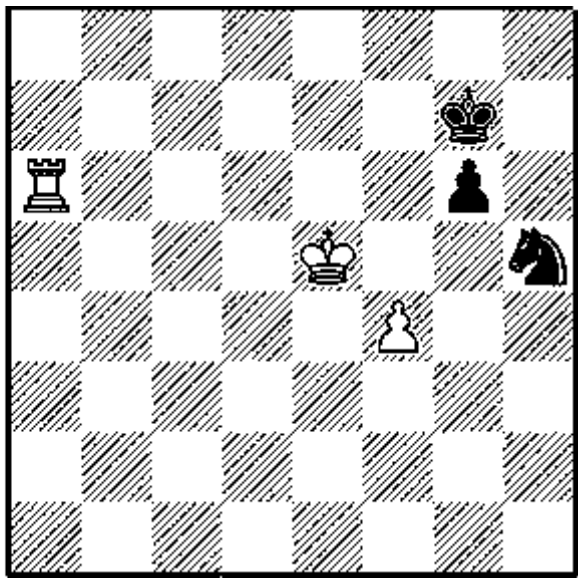
W



1 Ra7+ Kf8

1…Kh6 is refuted by 2 Rb7⊙ Ng3 3 Rb3 Nh5 4 Rh3 Kg7 5 f5 Kf7 6 f6+–.

The retreat to the eighth rank should also not have saved Black. However Taimanov was unable to find the winning line; after 2 f5? gf, the game ended in a draw.

White needs to sacrifice the f4-pawn, not exchange it. However, the immediate 2 Ke6? N×f4+ 3 Kf6 would not work: 3…Nd5+ 4 K×g6 Ne7+ (4…Ke8) 5 Kf6 Ng8+ 6 Ke6 (the drawing position we saw several times in the "Rook vs. Pawns" chapter) 6…Nh6 7 Rh7 Ng8!= (but not 7…Ng4??i).

2 Rd7! Kg8 (2…Ke8 3 Rh7 Kf8 4 f5+–) **3 Ke6! N×f4+**

3…Kf8 does not help: 4 Rf7+ Kg8 (4…Ke8 5 Rf6! Kd8 6 Kf7 or 6 Ke5) 5 Ke7 Kh8 6 Kf8 Ng3 7 Rg7 Nh5 8 R×g6+–.

4 Kf6 Nh5+

Also hopeless are 4…g5 5 K×g5, and 4…Kh8 5 Rd4! g5 6 Rd7 g4 (6…Kg8 7 K×g5) 7 Rd4 Ng2 8 R×g4 Ne3 9 Re4 Nd5+ 10 Kf7.

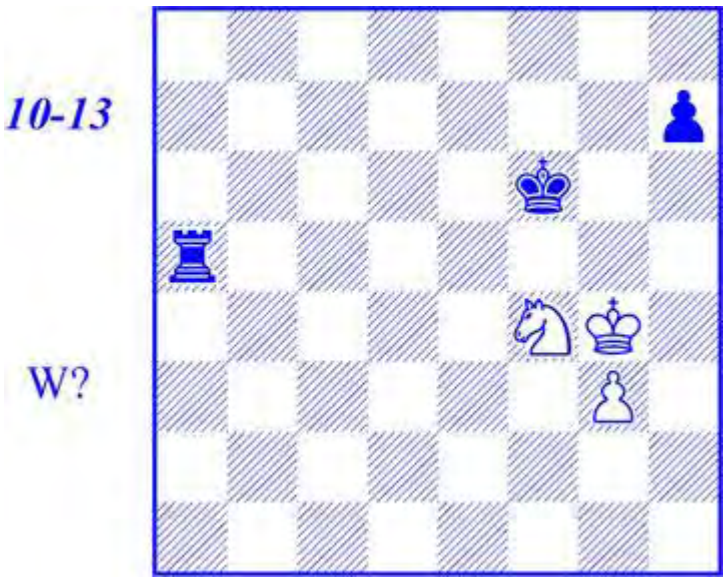
5 K×g6 Nf4+ 6 Kg5 Ne6+ 7 Kf6 Nf4 (7…Nf8 8 Rd8⊙) **8 Rd4 Ne2**

Now that the knight has been cut off, the rest is simple.

9 Rg4+ Kf8 10 Rc4 Kg8 11 Kg6 (11 Ke5) **11…Kf8 12 Kg5 Ng3 13 Kg4 Ne2 14 Kf3 Ng1+ 15 Kg2 Ne2 16 Kf2**+–.

Sturua – Yusupov

Baku jr 1979



When Artur Yusupov showed me this ending he had just played, I suggested that it made sense to keep the knight on h3 and the pawn on g4. Why? From h3, the knight not only impedes the approach of the black king, but is also prepared to hit the h7-pawn with Ng5. If Black advances that pawn to h6, then he will have to consider White's possible g4-g5.

After further detailed analysis, Yusupov showed that indeed, White can draw by retreating the knight.

Thus, 1 Nh3! (intending Kh4, g4) 1…Ra4+ (1…Ke5 2 Kh5 or 2 Kg5) 2 Kh5 Ra3.

2…Kf5 3 Ng5 Ra1 4 g4+ Kf6! is another try. Now 5 N×h7+?? Kg7 6 Ng5 Rh1+, or 5 Nf3?? Rh1+ 6 Nh4 h6⊙ is bad; but 5 Nh3! Rh1 6 Kh4 is sufficient.

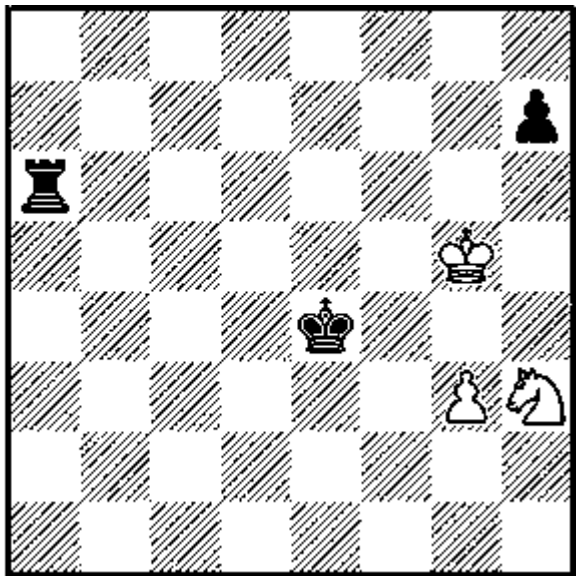
3 Kh4 Ke5 4 g4 Ra1 (4…h6 5 Nf2 or 5 Ng1, but not 5 g5? h5! 6 Ng1 Kf5!) 5 Kg3 h6 (5…Rh1 6 Kg2) 6 Kh4 Rh1 (6…Ke4 7 g5) 7 Kg3 Kd4 8 g5=.

White has a good deal of leeway in these lines; the majority of moves are not "only" moves. On the other hand, after the game continuation, it is much more difficult to defend. Both Yusupov and I thought that in the game White's position had become lost immediately, and this view was reflected in the first editions of the *Endgame Manual*. However a new computer examination demonstrated that in fact the draw was only missed much later.

1 Nh5+?! Ke5 2 Kg5 Ra6 3 Nf4 Ke4 4 Kg4!

4 Nh3?! was also worth a look here.

10-14



B?

On 4…Kf3?, White saves himself with 5 Kh5! h6 (5…K×g3 6 Ng5=) 6 g4 Kg3 7 g5=.

But Black wins with 4…Rg6+! 5 Kh4 Kf5! (but not 5…Kf3? 6 Ng5+ Kg2 7 Kh5 Rg7 8 Kh6=) 6 Nf4 Rh6+! 7 Nh5 Ke4! 8 Kg5 Rg6+ 9 Kh4 Kf3 10 Kh3 Rg4⊙ 11 Nf6 R:g3+ 12 Kh4 Rg6.

4…Ra5 5 Ne6!

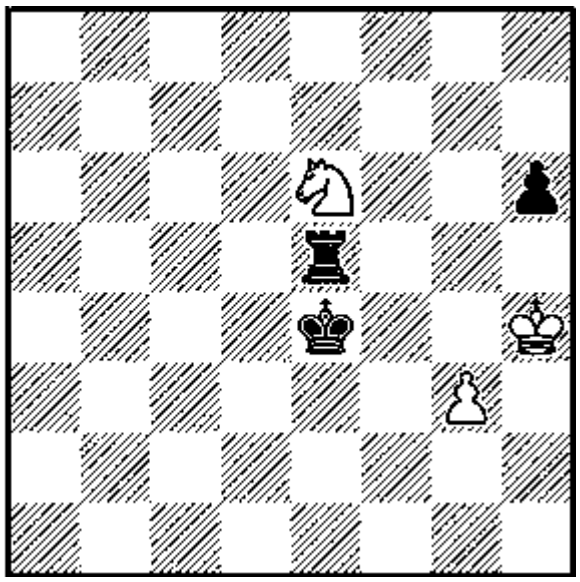
Wrong is 5 Nh3 h6! 6 Kh4 Kf3 7 Ng1+ (7 g4 Ra4 8 Ng1+ Kf2 9 Nh3+ Kg2, and wins by zugzwang) 7…Kg2 8 Nh3 (8 Ne2 Re5! 9 Nf4+ Kf3 10 Nh3 Re1–+) 8…Ra1 9 Nf4+ (9 Kg4 h5+! 10 Kh4 Rh1–+) 9…Kf3 10 Kh5 K×g3–+.

5…h6 6 Kh4!

Much weaker is 6 Nf4? Rg5+ 7 Kh4 Kf3 8 Nh5 Rg4+ 9 Kh3 Ra4 10 Nf4 Ra1 11 Kh2 Kg4–+.

6…Re5

10-15



W?

7 Nd8?

This is the little-noticed error! Also not good is 7 Nf4? Kf3 8 Nh3 Re1–+, while on 7 Nf8?, only 7…Rg5! 8 Ne6 Rg8! leads to the win.

The only correct knight retreat is 7 Ng7!!. For example, 7…Kf3 8 g4! Re1 9 Kh5 Rh1+ 10 Kg6 K×g4 11 Ne8!= or 7…Rg5 8 Nh5 Kf3 9 Nf6 Rg6 10 Nh7!! (10 Nh5 Rg4+ 11 Kh3 Rd4 12 Nf6 Rd1 13 Kh2 Rd6–+) 10…R×g3 11 Kh5 Rh3+ 12 Kg6=. It goes without saying that it is practically impossible to find this kind of concept associated with the sacrifice (not the exchange) of the last pawn over the board.

7…Kf5!?

Black has achieved a great deal in driving the knight away from the pawn. Here, he could win by 7…Re7!? (threatening 8…Kd5 and 9…Rd7) 8 Kh5! Kf5 (but not 9…Kd5? 9 Kg6=) 9 g4+ (9 Nc6 Re4 10 Nd8 Kf6 11 K×h6 Re8–+ or 11 Nc6 Rc4–+ does not change much) 9…Kf6! 10 K×h6

(10 Nc6 Re4 or 10…Re1 11 Kh4 Re4) 10…Rg7 11 Ne6 Rg8 12 Kh7 R×g4 13 Nf8 Kf7. On the other hand, the move played is no worse.

8 Nc6

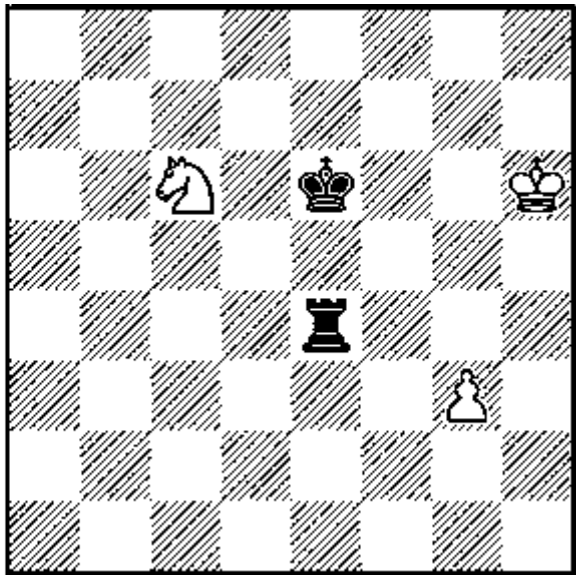
8 Nf7 is met by 8…Rd5! (but not 8…Re1? 9 g4+! Kf6 10 Nd6=) 9 N×h6+ (9 Kh5 Kf6+) 9…Kg6 10 Ng8 (10 Ng4 Rh5#) 10…Rd7–+.

8…Re4+! 9 Kh5 Ke6

9…Kf6 was simpler: 10 K×h6 Rc4 11 Nb8 (11 Na5 Rg4 or 11…Rc1 12 Kh7 Rc5) 11…Ke6, intending 12…Kd6, and the knight is caught.

10 K×h6

10-16



B?

10…Kd7?!

Black had the time to take the g3-pawn: 10…Rg4! 11 Kh5 (11 Nd8+ Kf6) 11…R×g3 (11…Rc4!? keeps the knight out of a5) 12 Nd4+ Ke5 13 Kh4 (13 Ne2 Rg2) 13…Re3–+.

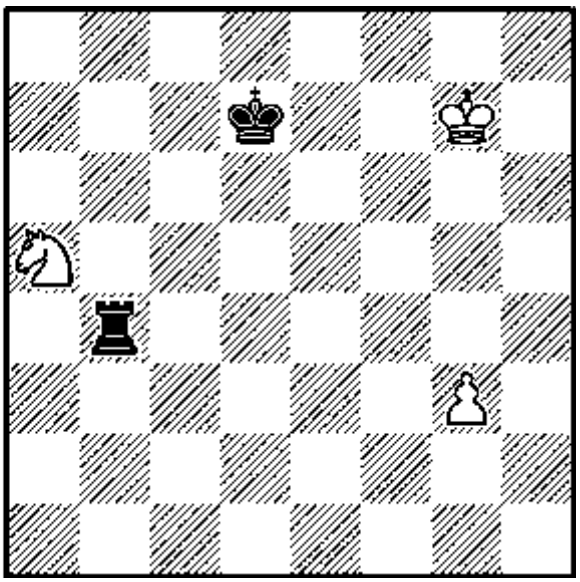
Yusupov believed that it was here he let slip the win; however, that came later.

11 Na5! Rb4!

11…Rg4? 12 Nb3! Ke6 (12…R×g3 13 Nd4; 12…Kd6 13 Nd2) 13 Nd2! R×g3 14 Ne4 and 15 Ng5+.

12 Kg7!

10-17



B?

12…Kc7?

Here is the fatal error! 12…Kd6? would not have won either, in view of 13 Kf7! (13 Kf6? Kd5! 14 g4 R×g4 15 Nb7 Rg8!–+) 13…Kd5 14 g4 R×g4 15 Nb7 Kc6 16 Nd8+ Kd7 17 Ne6=. The only right way was 12…Ke6!! 13 Nc6 Rc4, for example, 14 Na5 Rc5 15 Nb3 Rc3 16 Nd4+ Ke5 17 Ne2

Re3–+, or 14 Nd8+ Ke7 15 Nb7 Rg4+ 16 Kh6 R×g3 17 Nc5 Re3!–+.

13 Kf6! Kd6

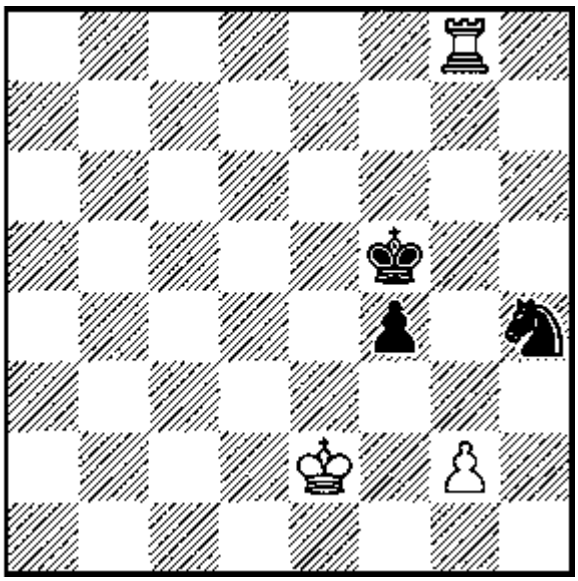
13…Kb6 14 g4! R×g4 15 Nb3 Rb4 (15…Kb5 16 Kf5) 16 Nc1!=.

14 g4 (14 Kf7 Kd5 15 g4=) **14…R×g4 15 Nb7+ Kd5 16 Nd8 Rf4+ 17 Kg6 Rf1 18 Nf7 Ke6 19 Ng5+ Ke7 20 Ne4 Rf4** Draw.

Tragicomedies

Suba – Chiburdanidze
Dortmund 1983

10-18



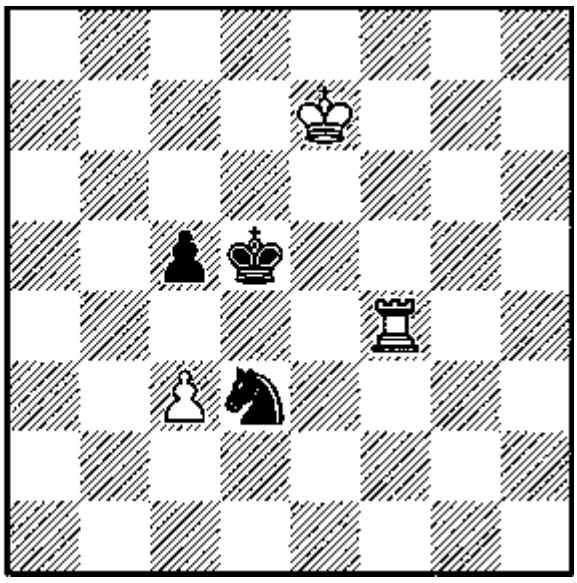
B?

It is a draw after 1…Ng6! 2 Kd3 Ne5+ 3 Kd4 f3!? (3…Ng6 is also possible) 4 Rf8+ Kg4 5 K×e5 fg 6 Ke4 Kg3.

But in the game, Black played **1…Ke4?? 2 g3!**+– **Nf3 3 Rg4 Nd4+ 4 Kf2 Ne6 5 gf Nd4 6 f5+**, and Black resigned.

Exercises

10-19



10/3
W?/Play

Multi-Pawn Endgames

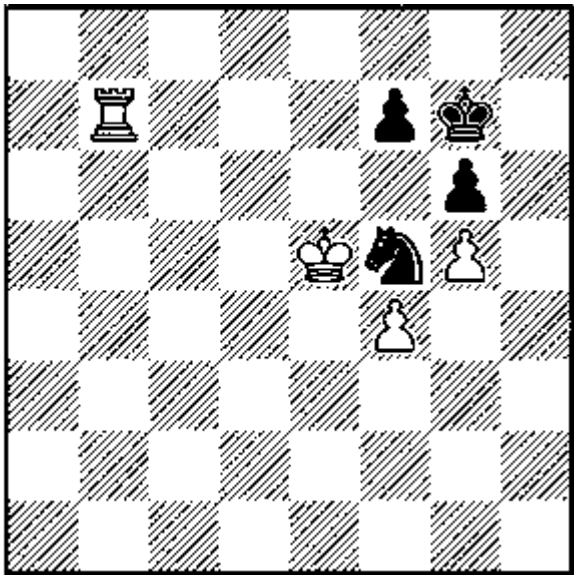
Pawns on One Side of the Board

When there are three pawns against three, or even two pawns against two pawns, all on the

same side of the board, the rook will, in the overwhelming majority of cases, win against the knight. But if the weaker side has an extra pawn, then he has real chances to draw.

Fridstein – Klaman
USSR ch tt, Riga 1954

10-20



W

White's plan is a routine and simple one: attack the f7-pawn; the king gets to e8 and then forces its way into f6.

1 Rb8⊙Ng3 (1…Kh7 2 Kf6) **2 Kd6 Nf5+**

2…Nh5 does not help: 3 Rb4 Kf8 4 Kd7 wins by zugzwang. Note that ***zugzwang is used again and again to bring home the advantage.***

3 Kd7 Kh7 4 Ke8 Kg8 5 Rd8! Kg7 6 Rd7 Kg8 7 Rc7⊙ Ng7+ 8 Ke7 Nf5+ 9 Kf6 Nd6 10 Rc6 Ne4+ 11 Ke7 Kg7 12 Rf6! Black resigned.

Vidmar – Alekhine
San Remo 1930

10-21

W

Alekhine considered the position won based on the outcome of the game. Afterwards, however, safe defensive methods were discovered.

One of these was proposed by Leykin in 1940. He held that White would do well to place his pawn at g4. Afterwards, his knight could combine threats against the enemy pawns with control over the access routes into his camp (the same strategy we saw in the preceding section). The best move is 1 Kh3! (intending 2 g4).

(a) 1…Ra3 2 Kg4 Ke6 3 Kf4 Kd5 (3…g6 4 g4) 4 h5 Kd4 5 Nd6 Kd3 6 Nf5 Ra4+ 7 Kg3 Ra5 8

Kf4 Ra7 9 g4 Ke2 10 Kg3= (10…Ra3 is met by 11 Nd4+, or even by 11 Nh4). In the final position of this variation, the knight would be just as favorably posted, were it to stand anywhere in contact with the f4-square – on e6 or g2, for instance.

(b) 1…Ke6 2 g4! Ke5 3 Kg3 g6 (3…Kd4 4 h5! Ke3 5 Nd6=) 4 Nf2 Ra3 (4…Kd4 5 Nh3 Ke3 6 Nf4, and the knight occupies its ideal square – f4) 5 Nh3 Ra4. Here, 6 Nf2? Kd4 7 Nh3 Ke3 is bad, but White has 6 Kf2!, without fear of 6…h5 (6…Kd4 7 Nf4) in view of 7 gh! R×h4 8 hg!=.

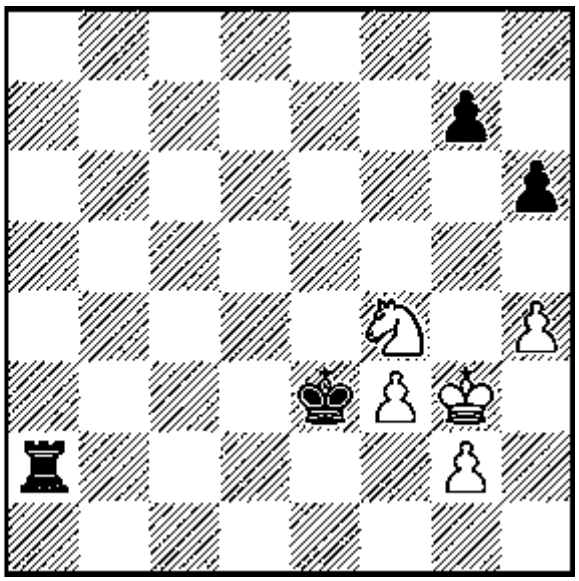
1 Nf2?! Ke6 2 Nd3 Kf5 3 Nf4 Ra4 4 Nd3 Rc4 5 Nf2 Rc6 6 Nh3 Ke5 7 h5

Alekhine considered this a bad move, since the h5-pawn, unsupported by its neighboring g-pawn, now comes under attack by the black rook. However, as we shall see, the draw is not lost yet.

Still, 7 Nf4 Rc2 8 Nh3 Rd2 9 Nf4 Ra2 10 Nh3 Kd4 11 Nf4 Ke3 is safer.

10-22

W



Here, Alekhine continued 12 Ne6 Ra7 13 Nf4 Ra6! 14 Nh3 Ke2 15 Nf4+ Kf1, rightly considering this position won. In fact, 16 Nh3 fails to 16…Rg6+, and 16 h5 is met by 16…Ra5 17 Kh2 Kf2 18 Kh3 Rg5 19 Kh4 Ke3–+.

But the defense can be strengthened. If we leave the king at h2 and the knight at e4, the incursion of the black king is not dangerous; it will be driven off the f1- and f2-squares by checks at g3 and e4. This plan was successfully employed in the game Kuzmin-Miles (Bath, ech tt 1973), in which the same position arose, but with the black rook at a4.

12 Nh5 Ra6 13 Kh2! Kf2 14 Ng3 Re6 (14…Rg6 15 Ne4+ Kf1 16 Ng3+ Kf2 17 Ne4+ Ke3 18 Ng3=) 15 Ne4+ Ke3 16 Kg3 Rg6+ 17 Kh2 Kf4 18 Nf2 Rd6 19 Ne4 Rd5 20 Ng3 Ra5 21 Kh3 g6 22 Ne2+ Ke3 23 Ng3 Kf4 24 Ne2+ Ke3 Draw.

By the way, even after 12 Ne6 Ra7, it is not yet too late to play 13 Nc5!, or 13 Kh2! intending Nc5-e4=.

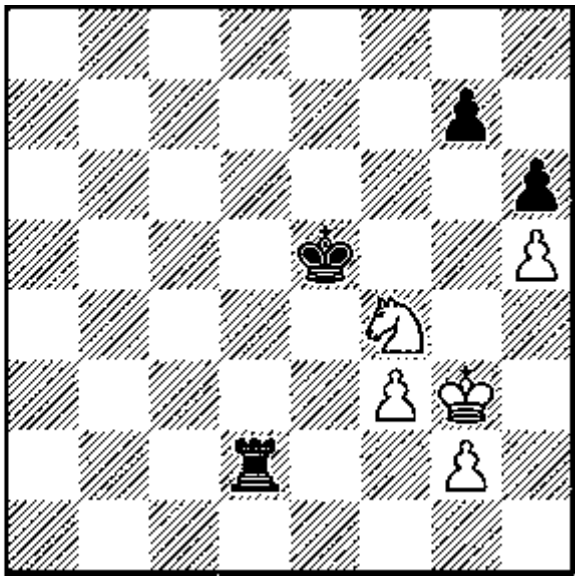
7…Rc2! 8 Nf4

8 Nf2 Kd4 9 Ne4 Ke3 10 Nd6 (10 Kh3 Kf4–+) 10…Rc5 11 Kh4 Rg5–+.

8…Rd2

10-23

W?



9 Nh3?

Here is the fatal error. As Miles pointed out, it was not yet too late to transpose into one of the drawn Leykin positions, with the pawn on g4, by playing 9 Ng6+! Kd4 (9…Kf5 10 Kh3! intending g4+, Kg3, Nf4=) 10 Nh4 Ra2 (10…Ke3 11 Nf5+) 11 Kf4! Kd3 12 g4 Ke2 13 Kg3=.

9…Kd4 10 Nf4 Ke3 11 Ne6

Also hopeless are 11 Nh3 Ra2 12 Nf4 Ra5 13 Ne6 Re5, and 11 Kg4 Rd4 12 g3 Ra4 13 Kf5 K×f3 (but not Fine's suggestion 13…Ra5+? 14 Kg6 Rg5+, in view of 15 Kh7! K×f3 16 Ne6 R×h5 17 N×g7, with a drawn position).

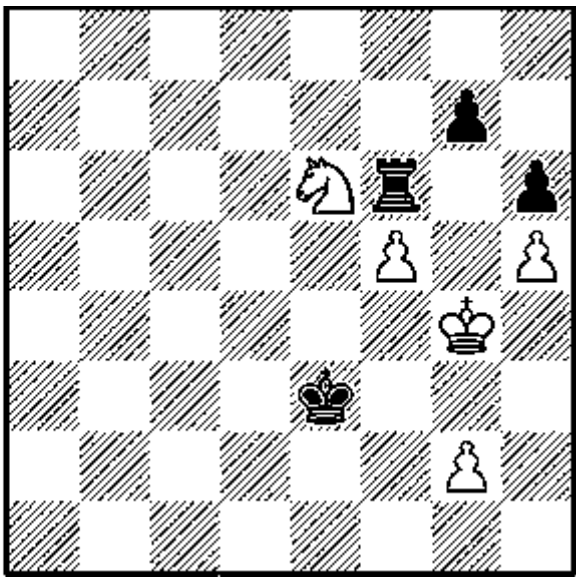
11…Rd5! 12 f4

12 Kh4 Re5! 13 N×g7 Rg5 14 Ne6 R×g2–+ (Alekhine).

12…Rf5! 13 Kg4 Rf6! (13…Ke4? 14 g3) **14 f5** (14 N×g7 R×f4+)

10-24

B?



14…Rf7?!

A bit of dawdling – which does not spoil anything. The strongest continuation was 14…Ke4! 15 N×g7 (15 Nc5+ Kd5 16 Nd3 Kd4 17 Nf4 Ke4) 15…Rf7 16 Ne6 (16 Ne8 Ke5! 17 f6 Rf8 18 Nc7 R×f6–+) 16…R×f5, and White is in a bad way. For example:

17 g3 Re5 18 Nd8 (18 Nf4 Rg5+ 19 Kh4 Kf3–+) 18…Rg5+ 19 Kh4 Kf3 20 Nf7 Rg4+ 21 Kh3 R×g3+ 22 Kh4 Kf4! 23 N×h6 Rg7! 24 Kh3 Rh7–+;

17 Kh4 Ke5 18 Nc5 Rf4+ 19 Kh3 Rd4 20 g3 Kd6! 21 Nb3 (21 Na6 Ra4) 21…Rd1 22 Kh4 Kd5 23 g4 Rd3 24 g5 (24 Nc1 Re3 25 g5 Re4+) 24…R×b3 25 gh Ke6 26 h7 Rb8 27 Kg5 Kf7–+ (analysis by Fine).

15 g3?!

After 15 Nd8!, Alekhine would have had to return to the above-cited variation, 15…Rf6 16 Ne6

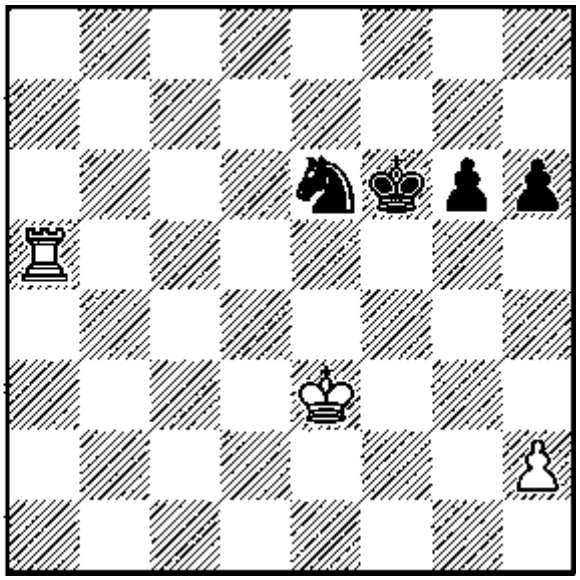
Ke4!.

15…Ke4 16 Nc5+ Kd4! 17 Nb3+ Ke5 White resigned.

Tragicomedies

Romanishin – Rodriguez
Moscow 1985

10-25



B

1…h5

1…Ng7, intending 2…Nf5, was simpler; but the text does not spoil anything.

2 Ke4 Ng5+ 3 Kf4 Ne6+ 4 Ke3

White triangulates with his king, in order to give the move back to his opponent.

4…Ng5 5 h4

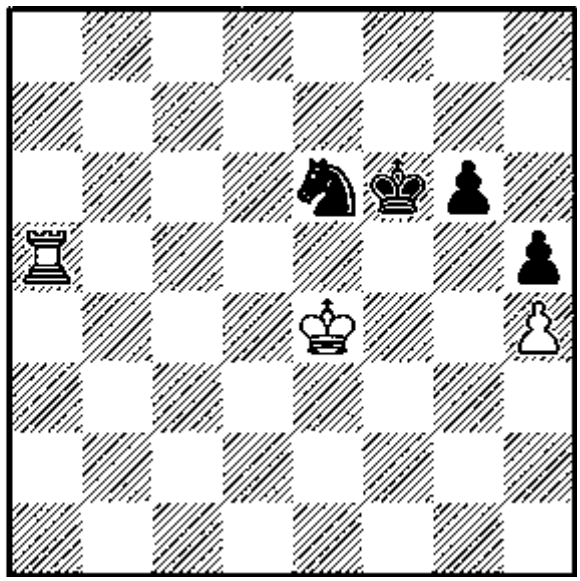
5 Kf4 Ne6+ 6 Ke4 Ng5+ 7 Kd5 Nf3.

5…Ne6?!

An unfortunate retreat. The draw was available with 5…Nf7! (intending 6…g5) 6 Kf4 Kg7 (as Rodriguez and Vera noted, 6…Nh6 was also possible, for example: 7 Ra6+ Kg7 8 Ke5 Ng4+ 9 Ke6 g5=) 7 Ra6 Kh7 8 Ra7 Kg7 9 Ke4 Kf6 10 Ra6+ Kg7 11 Kd5 g5 (the simplest; after 11…Nh6?! 12 Ke6, 12…Nf5? 13 Ra7+ Kh6 14 Kf6 N×h4 15 Rg7 loses, but 12…Ng4! avoids defeat) 12 Ke6 gh (12…Nd8+; 12…Kg6 13 Ke7+ Kg7) 13 Ra7 Kg6 14 R×f7 Kg5 15 Ke5 h3=.

6 Ke4

10-26



B

6… g5?

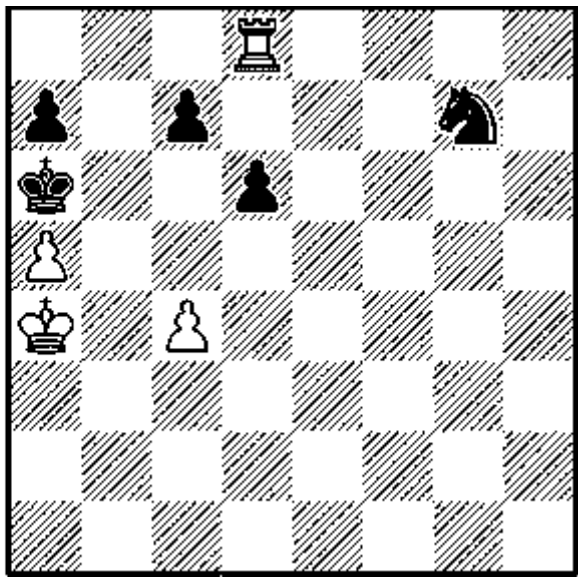
The decisive error! It was still not too late to send the knight to f7 by playing 6…Nd8 (also not bad is 6…Nf8). For example, 7 Ra6+ Kg7 8 Ke5 Nf7+ 9 Ke6 Nd8+! 10 Ke7 g5! (but not 10…Nf7? 11 Ra7!+–) 11 K×d8 gh 12 Ke7 h3=. In the game a very similar position has arisen by force, but in a version slightly more favorable to White.

7 Rf5+! Kg6 8 Ke5 gh 9 K×e6 h3 10 Ke5 h2 11 Rf1 Kg5 12 Rh1 Kg4 13 R×h2 h4 14 Rg2+! Kf3 15 Ra2

Black resigned in view of 15…h3 (15…Kg4 16 Ra4+! Kg3 17 Kf5) 16 Kf5 Kg3 17 Ra3+ Kg2 (17…Kh4 18 Kf4 h2 19 Ra1 Kh3 20 Kf3) 18 Kg4 h2 19 Ra2+ Kg1 20 Kg3 h1N+ 21 Kf3+–.

Exercises

10-27



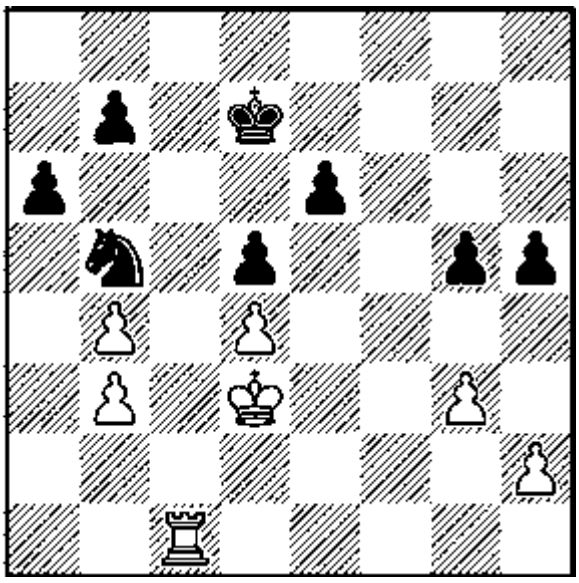
10/4
W?

Pawns on Both Sides

The rook is a much more mobile piece than the knight. When the battle takes place on both sides of the board, especially when there are passed pawns involved, the rook is usually stronger.

Matanovic – Larsen
Portoroz izt 1958

10-28



W

Black's position looks solid. His king can defend the invasion squares on both open files, "c" and "f." But White shatters his defenses by alternating threats to various parts of the board.

1 Re1 (△ 2 Re5) **1…Nd6 2 b5!**

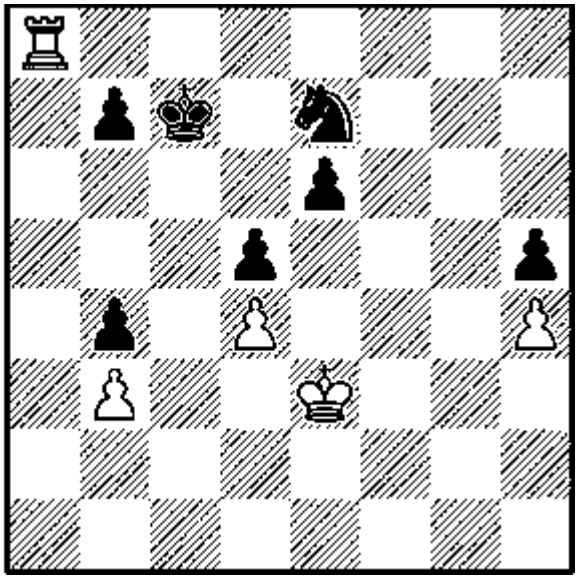
White gets nothing from 2 Re5 Nf5 3 h3 g4! But now, after 2…N×b5, White will play 3 Re5+–, while taking on b5 with a pawn opens up the a-file.

2…ab 3 Ra1 h4

If 3…b4 4 Ra8 Nc8, then 5 Ke3 Kc7 6 h4! gh 7 gh (△ Kf4). On 7…Nd6, the most precise way is 8 Rf8! Kd7 (8…Nf5+ 9 R×f5!) 9 Kf4 Ke7 10 Rh8 Nf5 11 Ke5 N×h4 12 Rh7+ Kd8 13 K×e6+–. 7…Ne7! is better for Black – from here, the knight is ready to go not just to f5, but also to c6.

10-29

W?



This would force White into the sharp line 8 Kf4 Nc6 (8…Nf5 9 Ke5) 9 Rh8 N×d4 10 R×h5 N×b3 11 Rg5. Observe the resulting position. White has only one pawn, against four of Black's; nevertheless, it is White who holds the advantage. The rook slings itself instantly from wing to wing, and can stop the enemy passed pawn in one move. The knight, on the other hand, is a short-stepping piece; even if it could get to the kingside, it would leave the b-pawn undefended.

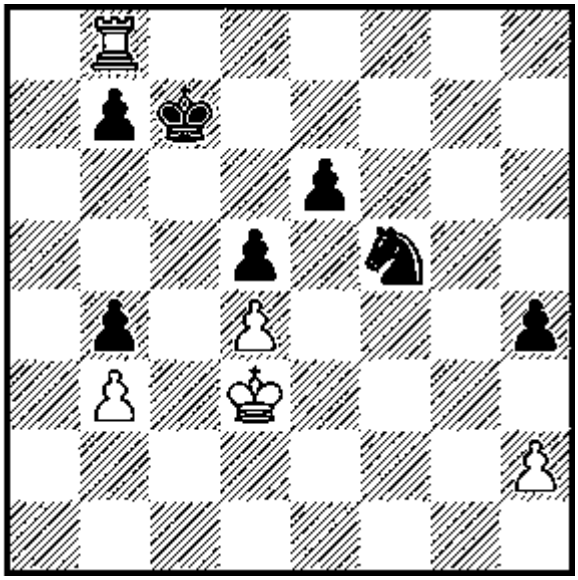
4 gh gh 5 Ra8 b4 6 Ra4?!

Unnecessary dawdling – the pawn cannot be taken anyway. 6 Rf8! was right.

6…Kc7 7 Ke2 (7 R×b4?? b5–+) **7…Kc6 8 Ra8 Nf5 9 Kd3 Kd7 10 Rb8 Kc7**

10-30

W



11 Rf8! Kd6 12 Rf7 b6 13 h3⊙ Nh6

13…Kc6 14 R×f5! ef 15 Ke3 Kd6 16 Kf4 Ke6 16 Kg5+–.

14 Rf4! Nf5 15 Ke2

After the rook protects the d4-pawn, the king can advance, creating the unstoppable threat of sacrificing the exchange.

15…Ke7 16 Kf3 Kf7 17 Kg4 Kg6 18 R×f5! ef+ 19 K×h4

The outside passed h-pawn decides the game.

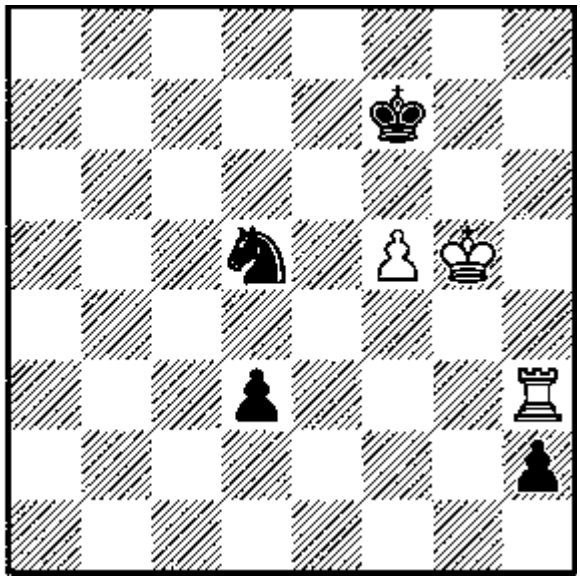
19…b5 20 Kg3 Kg5 21 h4+ Kh5 22 Kf4 K×h4 23 K×f5 Kg3 24 Ke5 Kf3 25 K×d5 Ke3 26 Kc5 Kd3 27 K×b4 Black resigned Tragicomedies

Tragicomedies

Minev – White
Vancouver 1985

10-31

W?



1 R×h2?

Not very precise! A zwischenschach would have cleared a square on the sixth rank for White's king thus: 1 Rh7+! Ke8 2 R×h2 Nc3 3 f6+–.

1…Nc3 (threatening 2…d2) **2 Rh7+?**

White could still have won by means of 2 Kf4! Ne2+ 3 Ke5 d2 4 Rh7+ Ke8 5 Rh1 Nc3 6 Ke6 (Müller).

2…Kf8??

Returning the favor. Black draws by 2…Ke8! 3 Kf6 (3 Kg6 d2 4 Rh8+ Kd7 5 Rh1 d1Q 6 R×d1 N×d1 6 f6 Ne3 7 f7 Ke7 8 Kg7 Nf5+) 3…Ne4+! (3…d2? 4 Ke6+–) 4 Kg7 d2 5 Rh1 Ng3=.

3 Kg6+–

Black has no time for 3…d2, since 4 f6 creates the threat of mate.

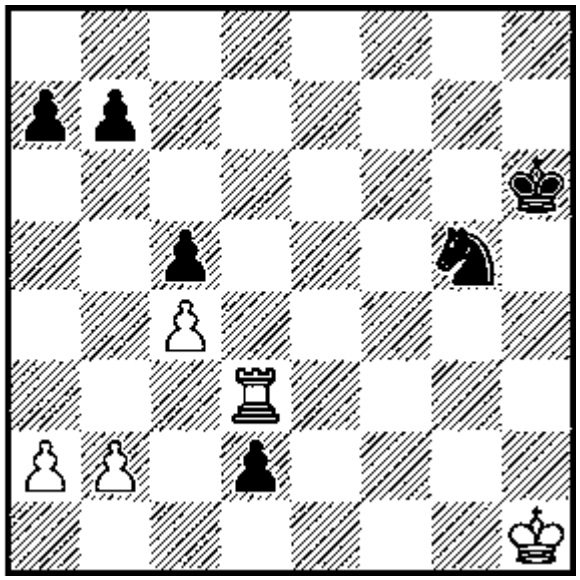
When the Knight is Stronger than the Rook

The knight is no weaker, and sometimes even stronger, than the rook when the board is strewn with pawn chains and the rook has nowhere to break into the enemy camp.

Another possibility: sometimes, the rook has a hard time dealing with a far-advanced enemy passed pawn supported by the knight. In such situations, the knight's tactical abilities come to the fore; it can create forks, win tempi by checking the enemy king, or cut the rook off from the pawn.

Sternberg – Pawelczak
Berlin 1964

10-32



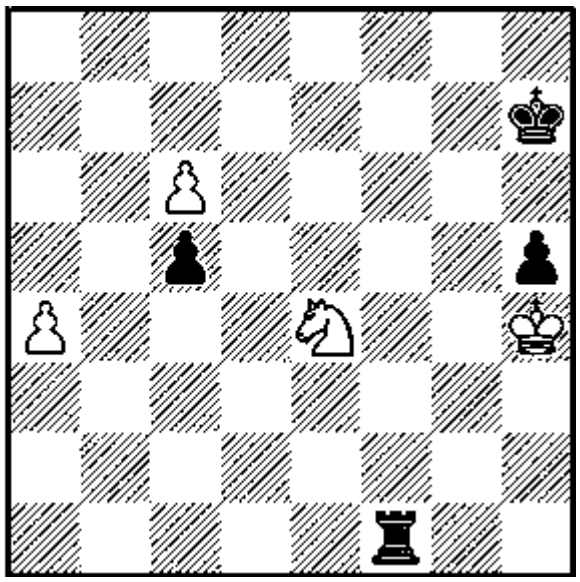
B?

1…Nf3! (△ Kg5-f4-e4)

White resigned, owing to his utter helplessness. He cannot play 2 Kg2, because of the fork 2…Ne1+; after 2 Rd6+ Kg5, Black threatens the interference 3…Nd4. And on 2 b4, simply 2…b6! (but not 2…cb? 3 Rd5 △ 4 Kg2) 3 bc bc–+.

H. Mattison, 1913

10-33



W?

1 c7? Rf8 2 Nd6 fails against 2…c4.

1 Ng5+! Kg6(g8)

1…Kg7 2 c7 Rf8 3 Ne6+ is completely bad. If 1…Kh6(h8), then 2 c7 Rf8 3 Nf7+ and 4 Nd8.

2 Ne6 Ra1

The a-file is the only way for the rook to reach the eighth rank.

3 c7

White only gets a draw from 3 Nf4+? Kf5 4 c7 K×f4! 5 Kh3 Kf3 6 Kh2 Ra2+ 7 Kh3 Ra1.

3…R×a4+ 4 Nd4!! Ra8

Either 5…R×d4+ or 5…cd lets the pawn queen. Black's hope of creating a fortress with the rook on g4 is illusory: theory holds that such positions are won without difficulty.

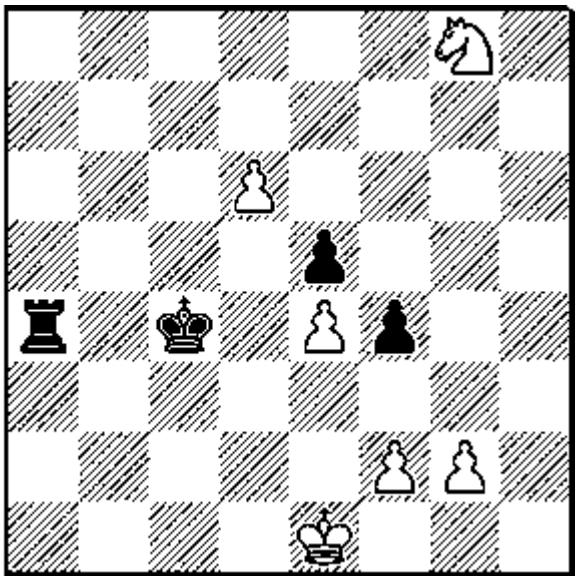
5 Nc6

Threatening the interference 6 Nb8, and 5…Re8 fails against 6 Nd8.

5…Rc8 6 Ne7+ (a fork), followed by 7 N×c8+–.

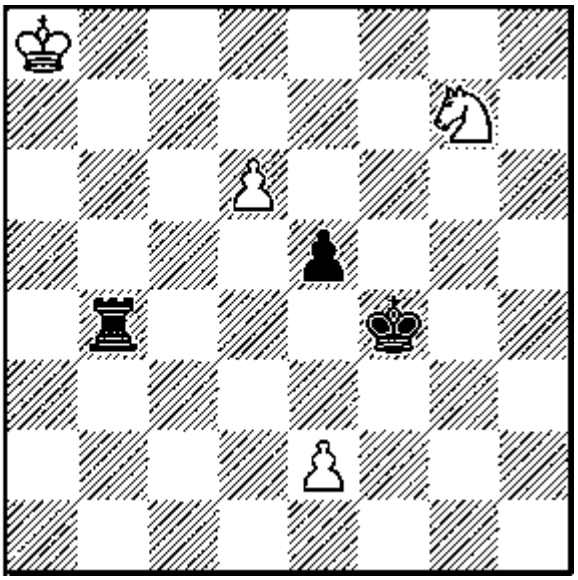
Exercises

10-34



10/5
W?

10-35



10/6
W?/Play

Chapter 11

Rook versus Bishop

The Lone Bishop

This chapter is dedicated solely to static situations, with all pawn on the same wing, in which the weaker side tries, successfully or not, to build a fortress.

In rook-versus-knight duels, precise positions which need to be remembered are rare. However, the case in question is characterized by frequent motifs of “elementary fortresses” which should be included in our endgame arsenal.

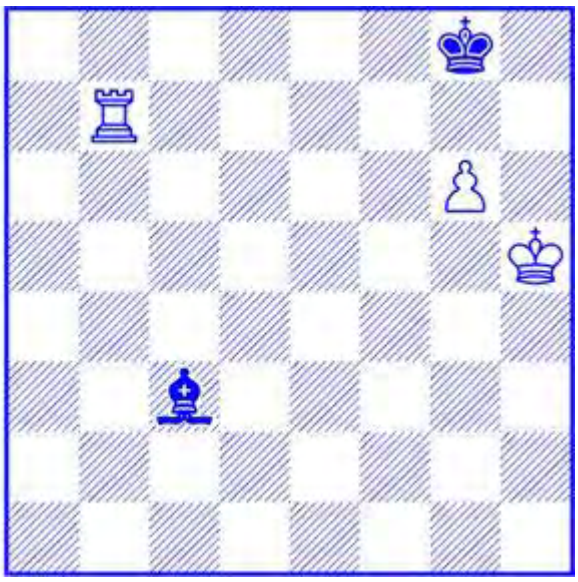
The Dangerous Corner

If there are no pawns on the board, a bishop can usually achieve an easy draw. Even squeezing the king to the edge of the board is not dangerous for the defender provided that ***the king is driven to the safe corner (opposite to the bishop’s color; the dangerous corner, on the contrary, is that of the bishop’s color).***

When the king is imprisoned in the dangerous corner, the endgame is lost.

B. Horwitz, J. Kling, 1851*

11-1



The g6-pawn is by no means a precious fighting unit for White. If it stood on g5, its value would have been much greater; here it only robs its own king of the important square g6. White should get rid of it.

1 g7! Kh7

The capture 1…B×g7 leads to an even more rapid finale: 2 Kg6 Be5 3 Re7 Bd6 4 Re8+ Bf8 5 Rd8⊙. But when similar events occur in the safe corner (Kh8, Bg8), the final position is a stalemate rather than a zugzwang!

2 Rf7!

It is important to prevent the king’s flight from the dangerous corner.

2…Bd4 3 g8Q+ K×g8 4 Kg6

If there were no rook on f7, Black could hold by means of 4…Kf8. Now White intends 5 Rd7 △ 6 R×d4 and 6 Rd8+.

4…Bg1!?

The only defensive chance: the bishop hides in the “shadow” of the white king. Unfortunately, the shadow is too short.

5 Rf1 Bh2 6 Rf2

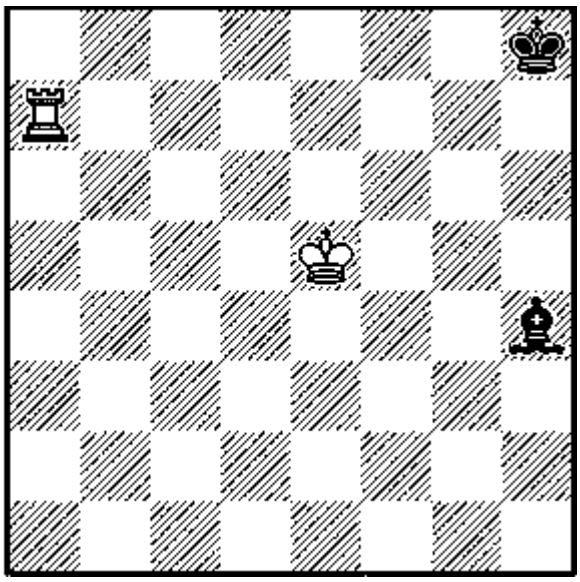
6 Rh1 Bg3 7 Rh3 Bf4 8 Ra3 Kf8 9 Rf3 is also good.

6…Bg3 7 Rg2! Bd6 (7…Bh4 8 Kh5+; 7…Be5 8 Re2) **8 Rd2 Be7 9 Rc2**+–.

Exercises

11-2

11/1
W?

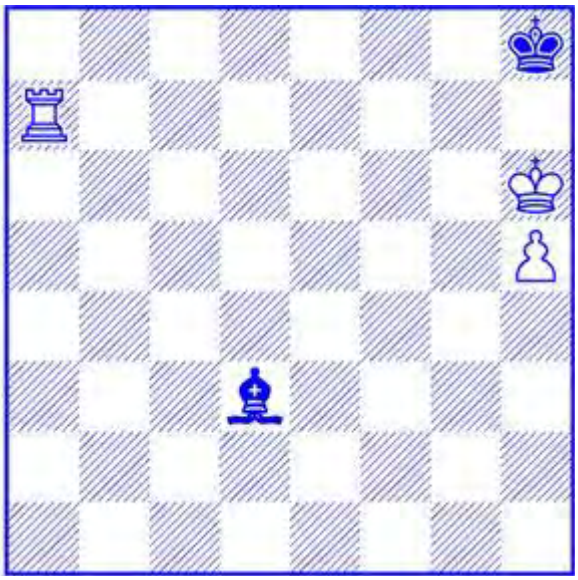


The Safe Corner

E. Lequesne, J. Berger*

11-3

B



Without the h5-pawn, both 1…Kg8 and 1…Bc4 2 Ra8+ Bg8 lead to a draw.

If the pawn stands on h6 and the white king on g5 (Cozio, 1766), the draw is also quite elementary. All that is needed is for the black bishop to keep the b1-h7 diagonal under control.

The diagrammed position is more complicated as some accuracy is required. As Lequesne has shown, playing for a stalemate with 1…Bc4? can be refuted because the bishop loses control over the important diagonal b1-h7:

2 Ra8+ Bg8 3 Kg5 Kg7 4 Ra7+ (or 4 h6+ Kh8 5 Rd8 Kh7 6 Rd7+ Kh8 7 Kg6) 4…Kh8 5 Kg6 Bd5 6 Rh7+! Kg8 7 Re7! Kh8 (7…Kf8 8 Kf6 Bc4 9 h6 Kg8 10 h7+ Kh8 11 Kg6) 8 h6 Ba2 9 h7 Bb1+ 10 Kh6+–.

Berger suggested the correct defense method: the black king should temporarily leave the corner.

1…Kg8! 2 Rg7+ Kf8! 3 Rg4 Bc2 4 Rc4 (4 Kg5 Kg7) **4…Bb1 5 Rf4+ Kg8**=.

Hence ***when the black king is placed in the safe corner, a pawn on h6 or h5 does not bring a***

win. A position is winning only when the pawn has not crossed the middle line.

B. Guretzky-Cornitz, 1863*

11-4

W

1 Kh6 Kg8

The winning technique after 1…Bd5 is already familiar to us: 2 Rd7 Be6 3 Rd8+ Bg8 4 Kg5 Kg7 5 Rd7+ Kh8 6 Kg6 Bb3 7 Rh7+! Kg8 8 Rc7! Kh8 (8…Kf8 9 Rg7) 9 h5 Bd5 10 Rh7+! Kg8 11 Re7!, etc.

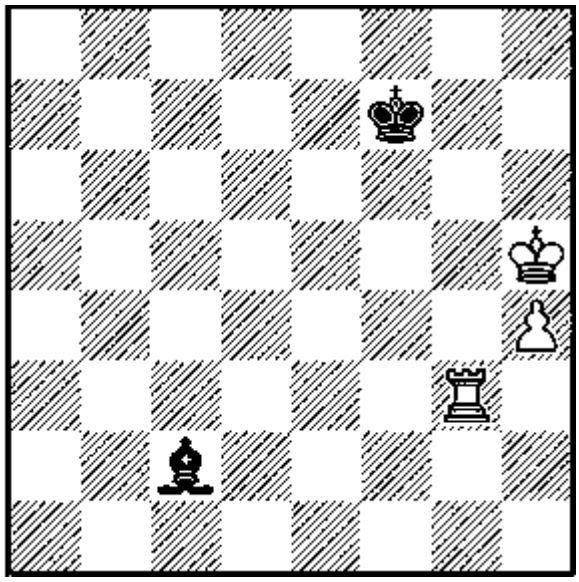
2 Rg7+ Kf8 (2…Kh8 3 Re7!)

White's forthcoming strategy can be described as follows: he creates the threat of the king retreat via h5 to g4 while his rook stands on g5 (this is why he should not advance the pawn to h5). If he succeeds, then the black king will be cut off from the pawn. If the black bishop tries to prevent this, it will lose control over the b1-h7 diagonal and White wins à la Lequesne. And, if the black king comes to f6, then a check along the f-file can push him away from the pawn even farther.

The following lines illustrate how this plan can be carried out.

3 Rg5 Kf7 4 Rg3 (4 Kh5 Bf3+) **4…Bc2 5 Kh5**

11-5



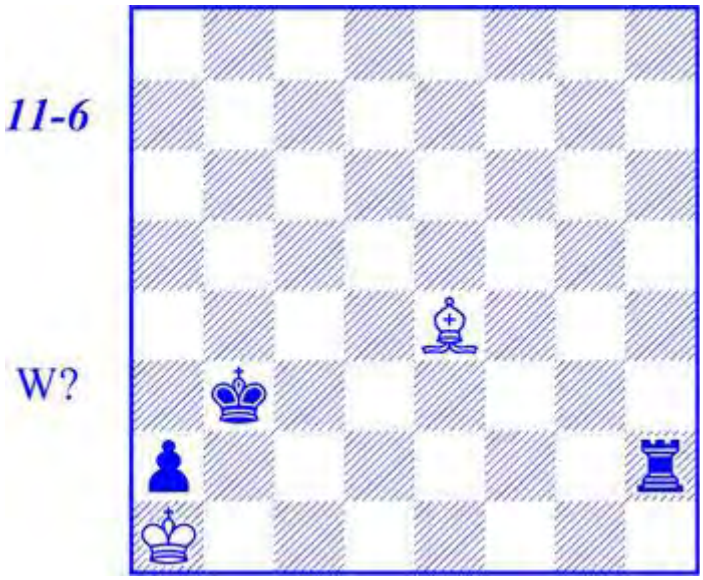
B

5…Kf6

5…Bd1+ (or 5…Ba4) 6 Kg5 Kg7 (6…Bc2 7 Kf4) 7 Rc3!+–; 5…Bb1 6 Rg5! (△ 7 Kg4) 6…Kf6 7 Kg4 Bg6 8 h5 Bh7 9 h6 Bg6 10 Kf4 Bh7 11 Rg7 Bd3 12 Ra7 △ 13 h7+–.

6 Rg5 (△ Kg4) **6…Bd1+** (6…Bf5 7 Kh6 Bc2 8 Rg2! △ Rf2+) **7 Kh6 Kf7** (7…Bf3 8 Rg1 △ Rf1) **8 Rg7+ Kf6** (8…Kf8 9 Kg6 △ Kf6) **9 Rg1 Be2 10 Rg2 Bd3 11 Rf2+**.

N. Gusev – Zhukhovitsky
Alma Ata 1958

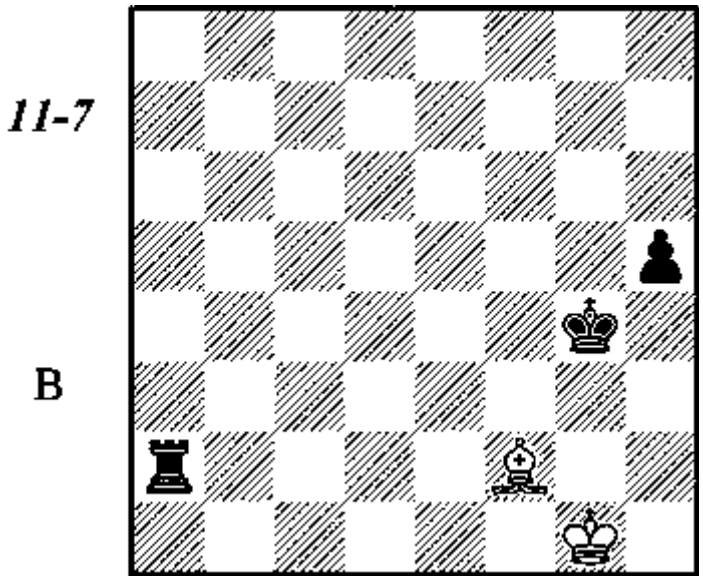


If the rook stands on some other file (e.g., on f2 or d2) the position is totally hopeless. But here White can save himself by means of **1 Bd5+! Ka3 2 Bg2!⊙ Rh5 3 Bd5!** (△ B×a2) **3…Rh2 4 Bg2!**.

However, the game continued 1 Bg2?? Ka3. Now it was White who was put into zugzwang; after 2 Bf1 Rc2, he had to resign.

Tragicomedies

Euwe – Hromádka
Pistyan 1922



1…h4??

Black could have won quite easily: 1…Kh3! 2 Bd4 Rg2+ 3 Kf1 (3 Kh1 Rd2 etc.) 3…Kg3! 4 Be5+ Kf3 5 Bf6 Rg4.

2 Bd4 Kh3?

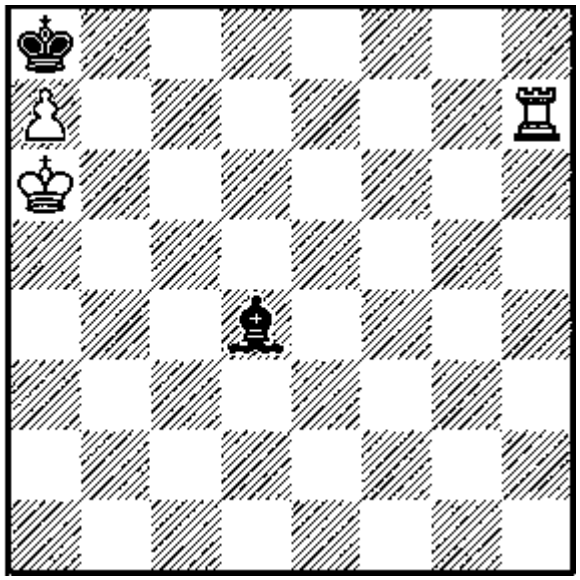
Now the bishop comes to the h2-b8 diagonal, and the position becomes drawn. A win, although rather complicated, was still possible: 2…Re2! 3 Ba7 Re8 (3…Rb2) 4 Bb6 Re7 5 Bc5 Rd7. The rook gradually deprives the bishop of important squares prior to decisive action on the kingside.

3 Be5 Rg2+ 4 Kf1! Draw.

Hedge – Palatnik

Calcutta 1988

11-8

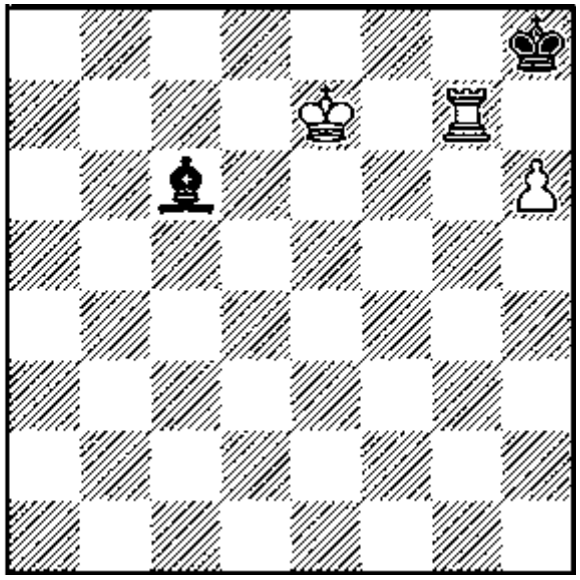


B

Grandmaster Semyon Palatnik resigned in this well-known theoretically drawn position (1…Bg7! 2 Rh4 Bd4!=).

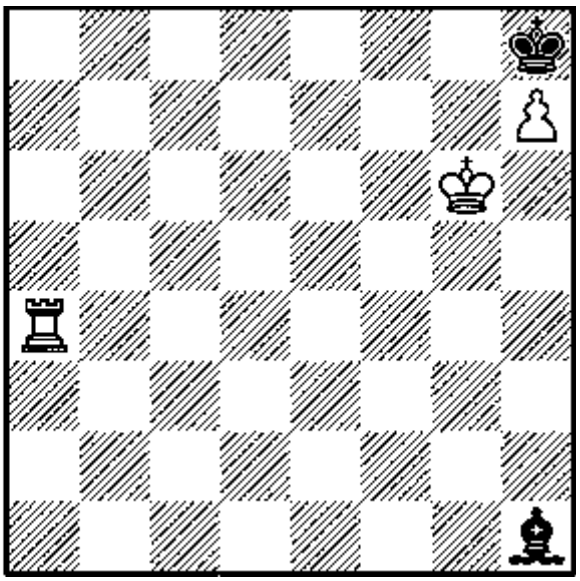
Exercises

11-9



11/2
W?

11-10

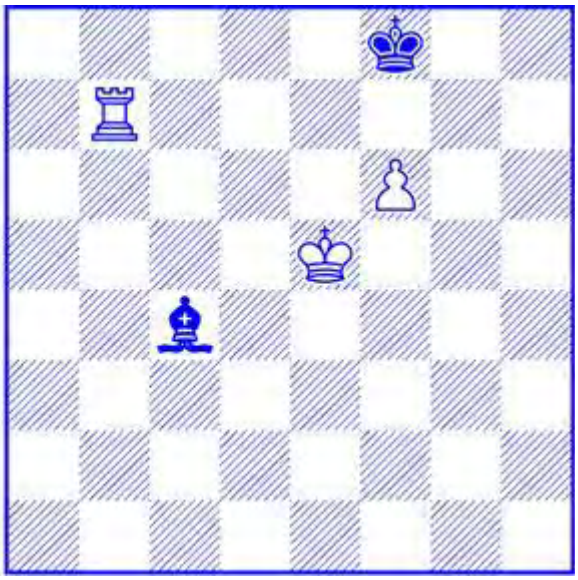


11/3
W?

A Bishop's Pawn

Szabó – Botvinnik
Budapest 1952

11-11



W

In the middle of the 18th century, Ercole del Rio proved that this position is drawn. Two centuries later, Botvinnik followed his analysis and saved a difficult endgame against Szabó.

When the pawn is still on f5, White has no problem, but here the pawn occupies the important f6-square. If 1 f7 (hoping for 1…B×f7? 2 Kf6+–), then 1…Kg7!=. All attempts to prepare an invasion by the king to g6 or e6 can be parried by Black if he defends correctly.

1 Rb4 Ba2 2 Kf5 Bd5□

2…Kf7? 3 Rb7+ Kf8 4 Kg6+–.

3 Kg6 Bf7+ 4 Kg5 Bd5 5 Rh4 Bb3 6 Rh8+ Kf7 7 Rh7+ Kf8 8 f7 Ke7! 9 Kg6 Bc4!

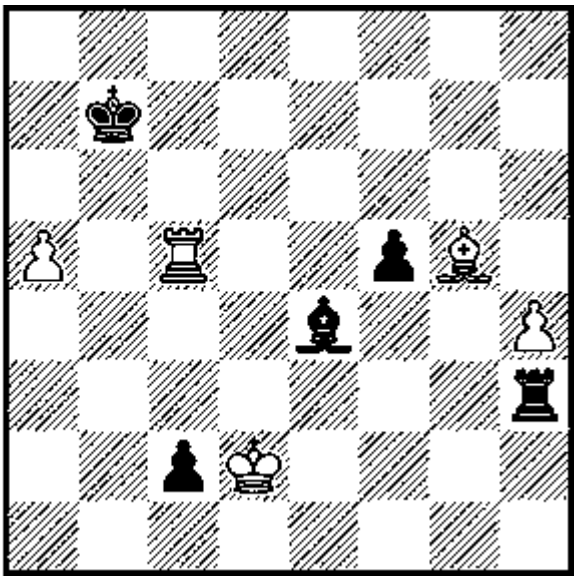
But of course not 9…Bc2+?? 10 Kg7+–.

10 Rg7 Bb3 11 f8Q+ K×f8 12 Kf6 Ke8 13 Re7+ Kd8 Draw.

We should add that, if all the pieces are shifted down by a rank, a similar defense does not work. As Centurini proved in 1865, White wins, although it can take some effort. All similar situations are lost also against a central or a knight pawn, so the del Rio position is the only successful elementary fortress of this kind.

Dolmatov – Georgadze
Erevan zt 1982

11-12



B?

Dolmatov knew the del Rio position and built his defense upon it. The game continued: 1…Rf3 2 Ke2 f4?! 3 R×c2! Re3+ 4 Kd2 B×c2 5 K×c2 Re4 6 Kd3 f3 7 Be3 R×h4 8 Bf2 Rf4 9 Ke3 Rf7 10

Bg3 Ka6 11 Kf2 K×a5 12 Be5, and White achieved a draw.

Georgadze did not exploit his chances fully. It is obvious that Black has no other plan than …Rf3 and …f5-f4, only he had to carry it out after first bringing his king to a6.

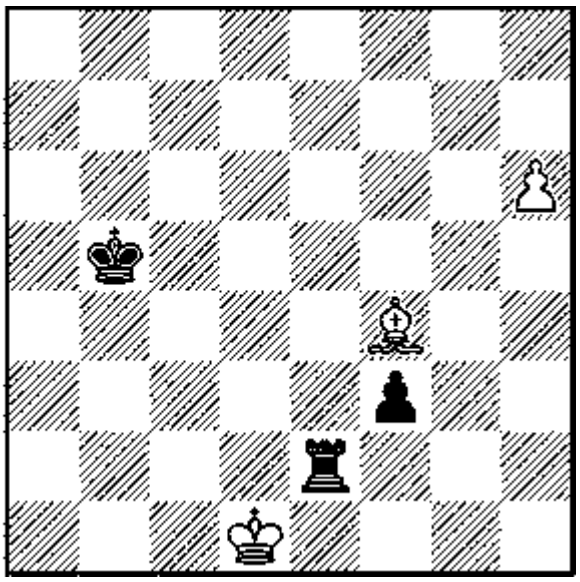
1…Ka7! 2 Ke2 Ka6⊙ 3 Kd2□ (3 Kf2? f4; 3 Ke1? Rh2) **3…Rf3**

White would now hold after 4 Rc3! Rf1 5 Ke2! Rh1 6 Rc5. The idea of the exchange sacrifice, successfully implemented in the game does not work here since Black's having an extra tempo decisively impacts the evaluation of the position.

4 Ke2? f4 5 R×c2 Re3+ 6 Kd2 B×c2 7 K×c2 Re2+! 8 Kd1! (8 Kd3? f3–+) **8…f3 9 Bf4□** (9 h5? Re4!; 9 Bd8? Re3!; 9 Bd2? Re8 10 Be1 Rd8+)

9…K×a5 10 h5 Kb5 11 h6

11-13



The tempting 11…Kc4? allows White to transpose to the del Rio position with 12 h7 Re8 13 Be3!! (but not 13 h8Q? R×h8 14 Ke1 Kd3 15 Kf2 Ke4 16 Bc7 Rh6!. Black does not let the bishop get to the key g1-a7 diagonal and eventually wins) 13…Kd3 14 Bb6 Rh8 15 Ke1=.

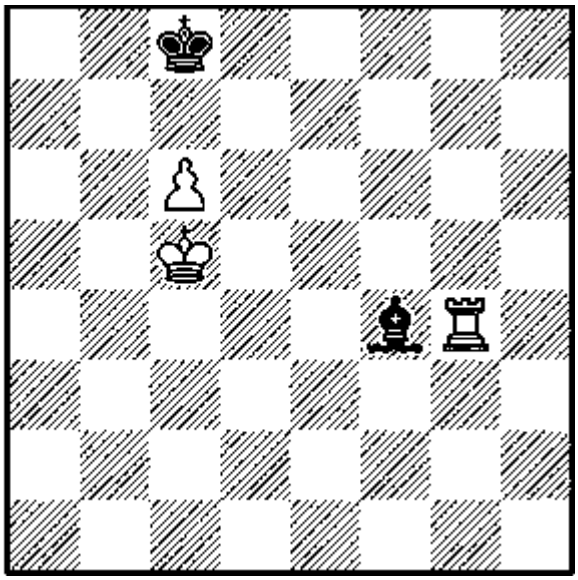
Much stronger is **11…Re8!** (threatening 12…f2) **12 Bg3** and only now **12…Kc4 13 h7 Kd3**–+. A theoretical fortress now cannot be created in view of the unfavorable position of the bishop (bad is 14 Bf2 Ra8). The game could continue 14 Bh4 Rh8 15 Ke1 R×h7 16 Bd8 Rb7 17 Kf2 Ke4 18 Bf6 Rc7 19 Bg5 Rc2+ 20 Kf1 f2 21 Kg2 Kd3 22 Kf1 Ra2⊙ 23 Bh4 (23 Bh6 Ke4 24 Kg2 Ra6–+) 23…Ke3 24 Kg2 Rc2 (one more zugzwang) 25 Bg3 f1Q+ 26 K×f1 Kf3–+ (Dvoretsky).

This sort of ***a rook's domination over a bishop*** is typical for many endings with an extra exchange. We have already seen it in some examples and exercises and will see more of it in the future.

Tragicomedies

Levitina – Gaprindashvili
Tshaltubo ct 1988

11-14

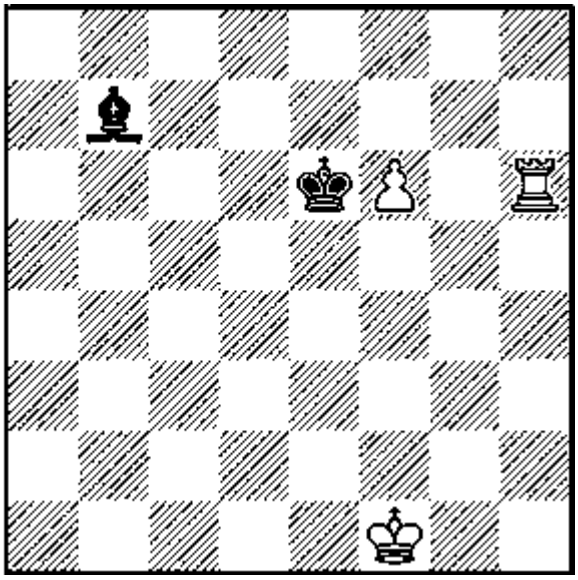


B?

1…Bh2?? (1…Be5=) **2 Rg8+ Kc7 3 Rg7+** Black resigned in view of 3…Kc8 4 Kb6+–.

Exercises

11-15



11/4
W?

Rook and Pawn vs. Bishop and Pawn

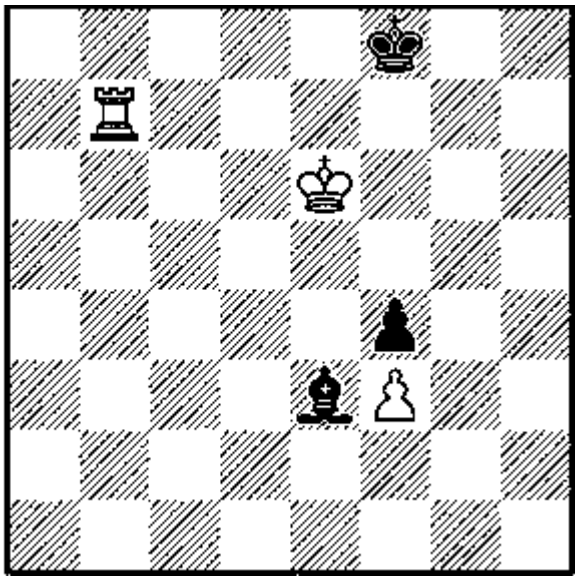
The Pawns are on the Same File or on Adjacent Files

One should not protect the pawn by placing it on a square of the bishop's color. Almost all these positions are lost. The adversary advances along squares of the opposite color, drives the king away from the pawn, and finally wins by means of an exchange sacrifice.

I confine myself to a single illustration of the above-mentioned technique.

Rohácek – Stoltz
Munich 1942

11-16



W

1 Rf7+ Ke8 2 Rf5! Bd2 3 Kf6

3 Rc5 Kf8 4 Kf6 Ke8 5 Re5+ Kf8 6 Rd5 Bc3+ 7 Kf5+– is no worse.

3…Kf8

3…Bc3+ 4 Kg6 Bd2 5 Kg7 Bc3+ 6 Kg8! Bd2 7 Re5+.

4 Rc5 (4 Rd5) **4…Kg8 5 Rc8+ Kh7 6 Kf7** Black resigned.

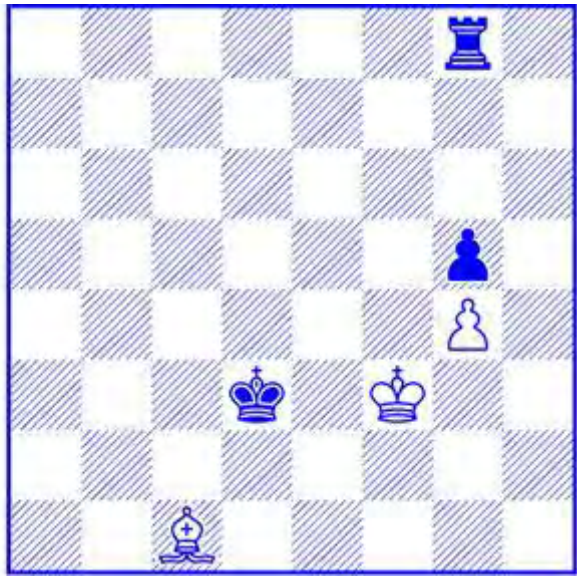
White plays Rg8-g4, approaches the pawn with his king, and takes it with his rook.

Chances of salvation can result from either ***an active defense*** (an attack against the hostile pawn by the bishop or king), or ***building a barrier*** that prevents an invasion of the hostile king (squares of one color are controlled by the bishop, squares of the other color – by the pawn).

Rubinstein – Tartakower

Vienna 1922

11-17



B

Black must protect his pawn with the king, bring the rook to the fifth rank, and finally move his king ahead again by going around the rook. This plan has no alternatives, but is not sufficient for a win.

1…Kd4 2 Bd2 Ke5 3 Be3 Kf6 4 Bd4+ Kg6 5 Be3

White continues to keep the pawn in the crosshairs. Another equally good defensive method consists in building a barrier: 5 Be5 Rc8 6 Bg3=.

5…Rb8 6 Bd2 Rb5 7 Ke4 Kf6 8 Bc3+ Ke6 9 Bd2 Kd6 (9…Re5+ 10 Kf3 Kd5 11 Bc3 Re6 12 Bd2=) **10 Be3 Kc6 11 Bd2 Kb6 12 Be3+ Ka5 13 Bd2+ Ka4**

11-18

W

14 Be3

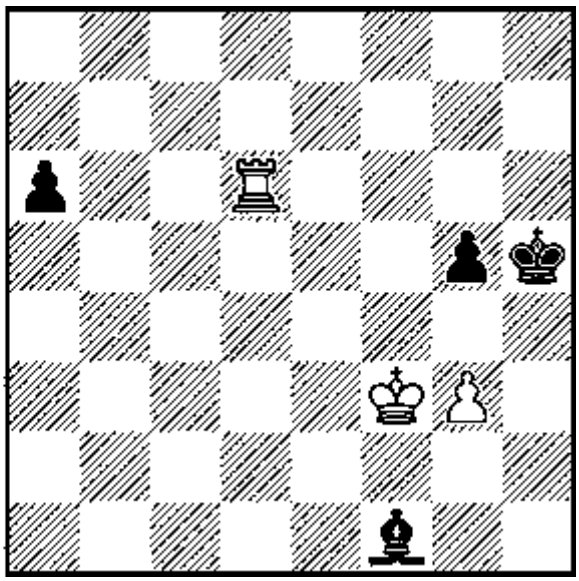
The bishop sacrifice on g5 is already in the air, but it does not work right now: 14 B×g5? R×g5 15 Kf4 Rg8 16 g5 Kb5 17 Kf5 Kc6 18 g6 Kd7 19 Kf6 Rf8+.

14…Kb3 15. Bc1 Kc2 16 B×g5! (it is time!) **16…R×g5 17 Kf4 Rg8 18 g5 Kd3 19 Kf5 Kd4 20 g6 Kd5 21 Kf6** Draw.

Chistiakov – Dvoretsky

Moscow ch 1966

11-19



B?

1…Bh3!

1…g4+? 2 Kf4 Be2 3 Kf5 is hopeless.

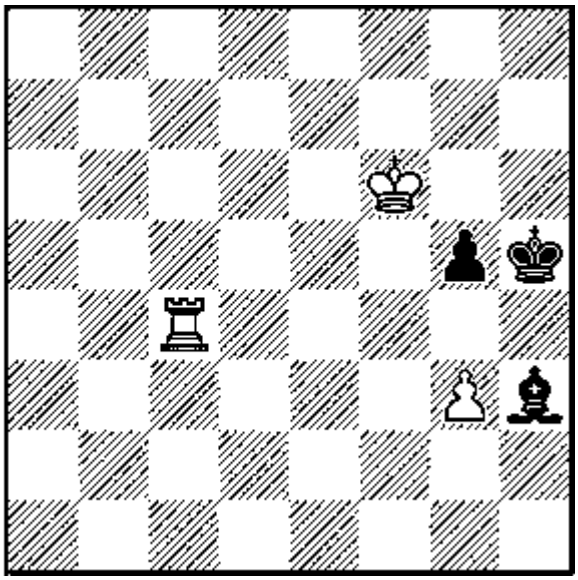
2 R×a6 Bd7 3 Rd6 Bg4+ 4 Ke3 Bc8 5 Rd8 Be6 6 Rd4 Bc8

The only winning attempt is the transfer of the king to f6 followed with Rd5. Black responds with a counter-attack against the g3-pawn.

7 Kd3 Bf5+ 8 Kc4 Be6+ 9 Kc5 Bc8 10 Kd6 Bf5 11 Rc4 Bh3 12 Ke5 Bd7 13 Kf6 Bh3

11-20
$

W



14 Rc5

After 14 Rd4 Bc8 15 Rd5 a position from the game Romanovsky-I.Rabinovich arises (from Leningrad 1924, with reversed colors). Romanovsky drew the game after 15…Kg4! 16 R×g5+ Kf3 17 Rc5 Bh3! (17…Bb7? is incorrect in view of 18 Rc3+! Kg4 19 Rc7 △ Rg7+) 18 Rc3+ Kg4 followed by …Bg2-f3.

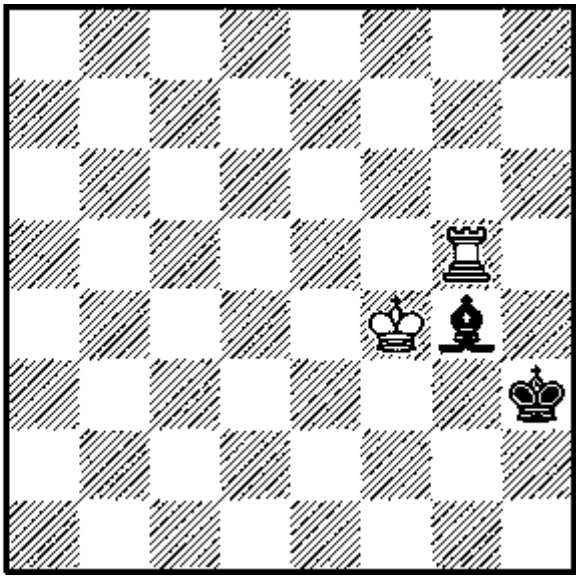
14…Kg4! 15 R×g5+ Kf3 16 Ke5 Bg4 17 Kd4 K×g3 (17…Bh3! is perhaps simpler) **18 Ke3 Kh3**

It would have been nice to stay farther from the dangerous corner (h1), but 18…Kh4? loses to 19 Kf4+–.

19 Kf4

11-21

B?



19…Bd7??

A grave blunder in a drawn position. Black should have kept the f3-square under control: 19…Bd1 or 19…Be2.

20 Rg3+ Kh2 21 Kf3+–

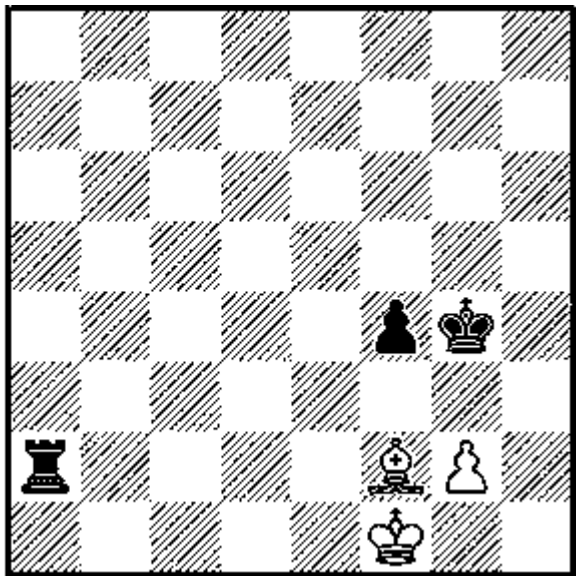
The black king stays locked in the dangerous corner.

21…Ba4 22 Rg2+ Kh3 23 Rg3+ Kh2 24 Kf2 Bc2 25 Rc3 Bd1 26 Rc1 Bb3 27 Rc6 Black resigned.

G. Barcza, 1967

11-22
$

W?



White's position looks perilous but he still holds, as Black cannot breach the barrier. Two factors help White: his king is close to the safe corner h1, and Black has a bishop pawn.

1 Ke1!

Both 1 Be1? f3! 2 g3 Ra1 3 Kf2 R×e1 4 K×e1 K×g3 and 1 Kg1? Ra1+ 2 Kh2 Rc1⊙ 3 Bd4 Rc2 (△ f3) 4 Kg1 Kg3 or 3 Bg1 Rc2 4 Kh1 Re2⊙ 5 Bh2 Re8 6 Bg1 (6 Kg1 Re1+) 6…Rh8+ 7 Bh2 Kf5 8 Kg1 Ke4 9 Kh1 Ke3 10 Kg1 Rh7⊙ 11 Kh1 Kf2 are bad.

1…Ra1+

1…Rb2 2 Kf1 f3 leads to nowhere in view of 3 Kg1! Rb1+ 4 Kh2=.

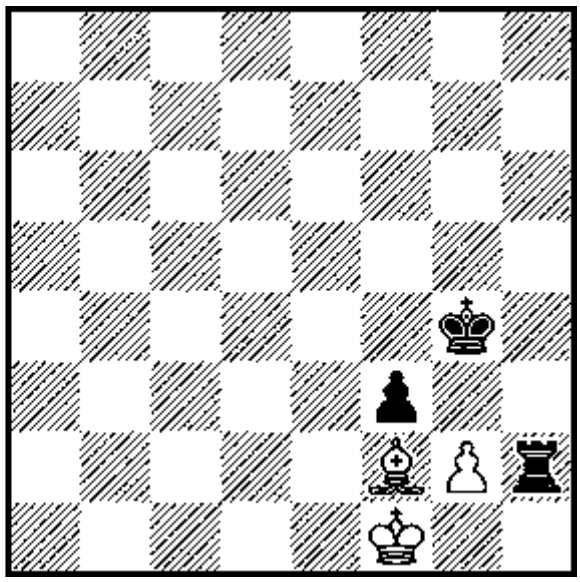
2 Ke2 Rc1

2…Rh1 3 Be1! Rh2 4 Kf1 f3 5 gf+ K×f3 6 Kg1 Rg2+ 7 Kh1!=.

3 Kd2! (3 Be1? Rc2+ 4 Kf1 f3–+) **3…Rh1 4 Ke2 Rh2 5 Kf1 f3**

11-23

W?



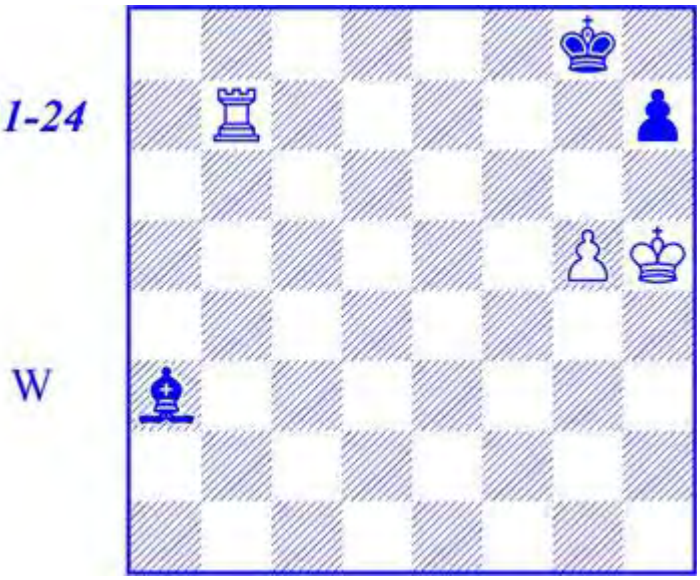
It seems like the defense is broken, but White saves the game by means of a pawn sacrifice that leads to the del Rio position.

6 Kg1! R×g2+ 7 Kf1=

Incidentally, Averbakh has analyzed a similar situation, shifting all the kingside pieces one file to the left. In his opinion, the position has remained a draw. This evaluation is wrong; readers may verify this independently with the help of computer endgame databases.

N. Elkies, 1993

11-24



W

Keres evaluated the diagrammed position as drawn, and numerous authors reproduced this judgment. Yet Elkies, an Israeli endgame study composer, discovered a subtle winning method many years later.

Its idea can be briefly described as follows: the king retreats to g4, the rook goes to b5 or d5, denying the bishop important squares. Thereafter, depending on the bishop's position, the white king breaks through to f6 or h6, while if the bishop is on f8 or g7, the advance g5-g6 is very strong.

1 Rb3!

Also possible is 1 Kg4 Bc1!? 2 Kf5 Bd2 (2…h6? 3 Kg6!) 3 Rb2 (3 Rb3 Kg7) 3…Be3 4 Rb3 Bd4 5 Rd3.

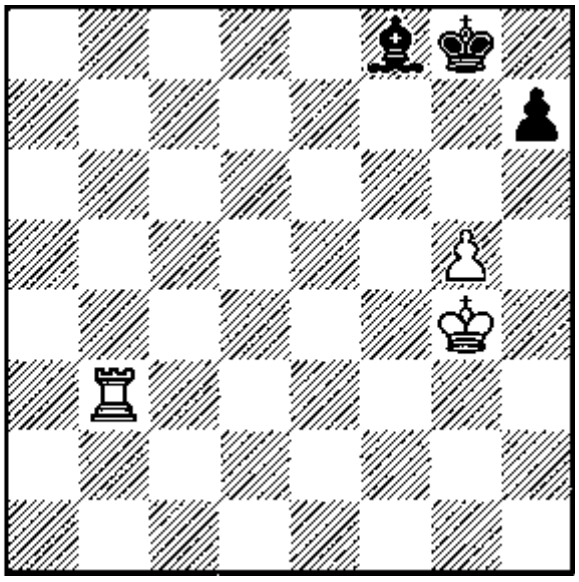
1…Bd6

1…Bf8 loses rapidly: 2 Rb8 Kg7 3 Rb7+ Kg8 4 g6. If 1…Bc5 2 Kg4 Bd6, then 3 Rb5 Bc7 4 Rd5! and the king is ready for a march.

2 Kg4 Bf8!

2…Bc5 is met with 3 Rb5!, and the bishop cannot prevent an invasion by the king. For example, 3…Bd4 4 Kh5 (△ Rb8+, Rb7+, Kh6) 4…Bg7 5 g6 h6 6 Rb8+ Bf8 7 R×f8+ K×f8 8 K×h6, or 3…Ba3 4 Kf5 (△ 5 Kf6), or 3…Bd6 4 Kf5 Bc7 5 Rd5! Bb6 (5…Bg3 6 Rd8+ Kg7 7 Rd7+ and 8 Kf6) 6 Kf6 Bc7 7 Rd7 Ba5 8 Rg7+! Kh8 9 Kf7, or 3…Bf8 4 Kf5 h6 (4…Bg7 5 g6! h6 6 Rb8+ Bf8 7 Kf6; 4…Be7 5 g6) 5 g6 (5 gh Kh7 6 Rb6 B×h6 7 Rb7+ is also good) 5…Be7 (5…Bd6 6 Kf6) 6 Rb8+ Kg7 7 Rb7+–.

11-25



W

3 Kf5!

Less precise is 3 Rb5?! because of 3…h6!? 4 g6 Bd6 5 Kf5 Bg3!. Black saves himself if the

bishop can get to the c1-h6 diagonal, for example, 6 Ra5? Bh4 7 Ra8+ Kg7 8 Ra7+ Kg8 9 g7 Kh7 10 Ke6 (nor does 10 Rf7 Bg5 11 g8Q+ K×g8 12 Kg6 Bd2 13 Rd7 Bg5 achieve anything) 10…Kg8=. The bishop's access to the necessary squares is prevented by 6 Rb4! Bc7 7 Rd4 Ba5 8 Kg4! Bb6 9 Rd3, and there is no satisfactory defense to the threat of 10 Kh5.

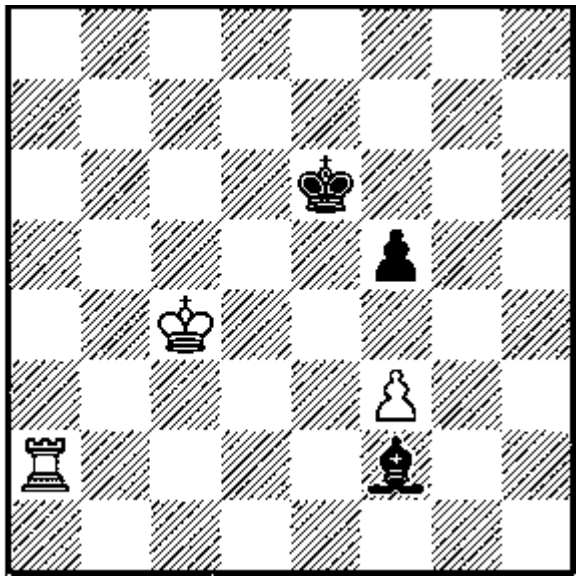
3…Bc5 4 Rd3! Bb4

If 4…Be7, then 5 Rc3! Bb4 6 Rc8+ Kf7 7 Rc7+ Be7 (7…Kg8 8 Kf6) 8 Kg4 and Kh5-h6 is irresistible.

5 Kf6 Ba5 6 Rb3 Bd8+ (6…Bc7 7 Rb5 Bd8+ 8 Ke6! Kg7 9 Kd7) **7 Kf5 Ba5** (7…Bc7 8 Rb5) **8 Kg4 Bc7 9 Rb5! Bd6 10 Kf5 Bc7 11 Rd5**+–.

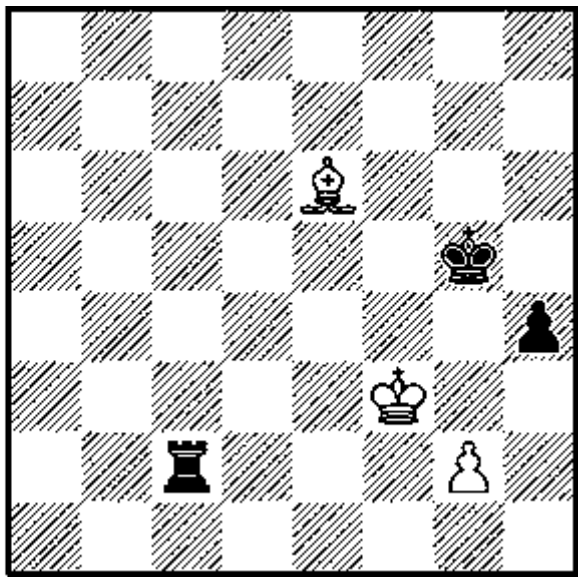
Exercises

11-26



11/5
B?

11-27



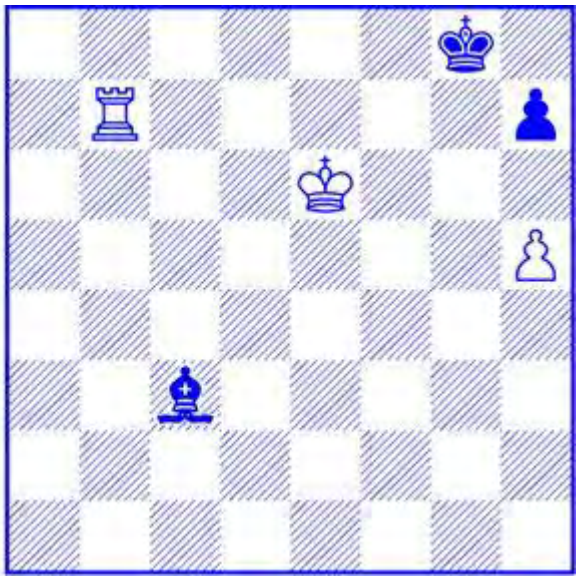
11/6
B?

Rook Pawns

Positions with rook pawns are quite difficult, even top grandmasters cannot avoid errors when playing them. Nevertheless, knowledge of their basic ideas makes certain practical sense.

J. Enevoldsen, 1949*

11-28



B

This is perhaps the most favorable situation for the stronger side. The pawn has crossed the middle line and the black king is in the dangerous corner. White forces …h7-h6, then drives the black king farther away and cuts it off along a file. Finally White comes back to the pawn with his king and sacrifices his rook for the bishop.

However, there is an important caveat. This plan is only feasible because the black king is cut off on the eighth rank. If the king is on g7, the position is drawn. White cannot force the king to the edge of the board, carry out h5-h6 or force his opponent to play h7-h6.

1…h6

Black cannot do without this move. On 1…Bd2, there could follow 2 Kf6 Bc3+ 3 Kf5 Bd2 4 Rd7 Bc1 5 Rd1 Be3 6 Kf6.

2 Kf5 Bd2 3 Kg6 Kf8 4 Rf7+ Ke8

If Black keeps his king in the corner he is put into zugzwang very quickly: 4…Kg8 5 Rf3 Bg5 6 Rf2⊙ Be3 7 Re2+–.

5 Rf2 Bg5 6 Kg7 Ke7 7 Re2+ Kd7 8 Kf7 Kd6 9 Re4! (zugzwang again) **9…Bc1 10 Re6+ Kd5 11 Kf6 Bd2 12 Kf5 Bg5 13 Rg6** (△ 14 R×g5) **13…Bd2 14 Rg2** (14 Rg8) **14…Be3 15 Rg3 Bc1 16 Rd3+ Kc4 17 Rd7**

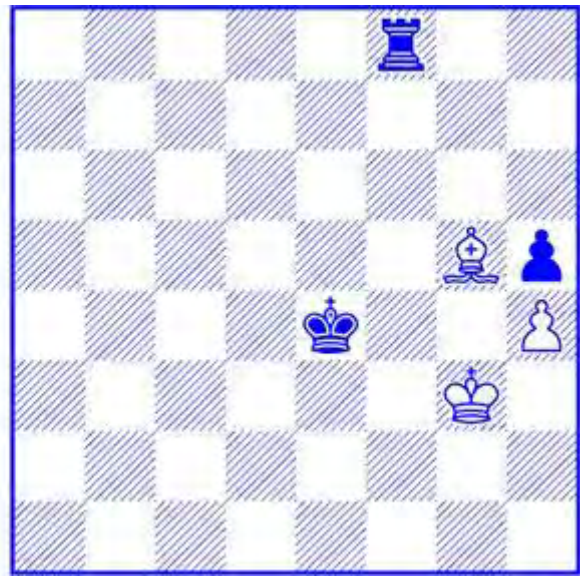
Endgame handbooks suggest 17 Ke4 followed by driving the black king back one more file, but this is already superfluous: he may go after the h6-pawn immediately.

17…Bg5 18 Kg6 Kc5 19 Rh7 Kd6 20 R×h6+–.

Salwe – Rubinstein

Prague 1908

11-29



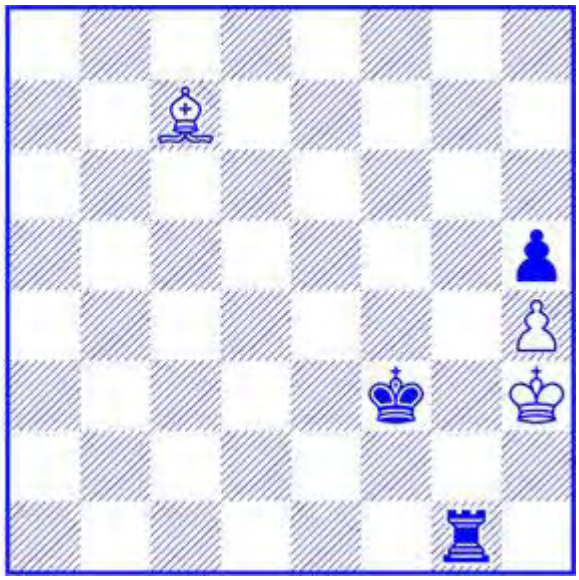
B

Rubinstein carried out the same plan of driving the king off from the pawn that we have seen in the previous example, and was successful with it. However it was later proven that White could have held the position with a precise defense.

Maizelis found the answer to this endgame puzzle in 1963. It turned out that Black should not drive the white king away from the corner. On the contrary, the king should be locked in the corner, with idea of putting Black in zugzwang. Let us study the analysis by Maizelis.

1…Kd3! 2 Bf4 Ke2 3 Bg5 Rf3+ 4 Kg2 Ra3 5 Be7 Ra4 6 Bd8 Rg4+ 7 Kh3 Kf3 8 Bc7 Rg1

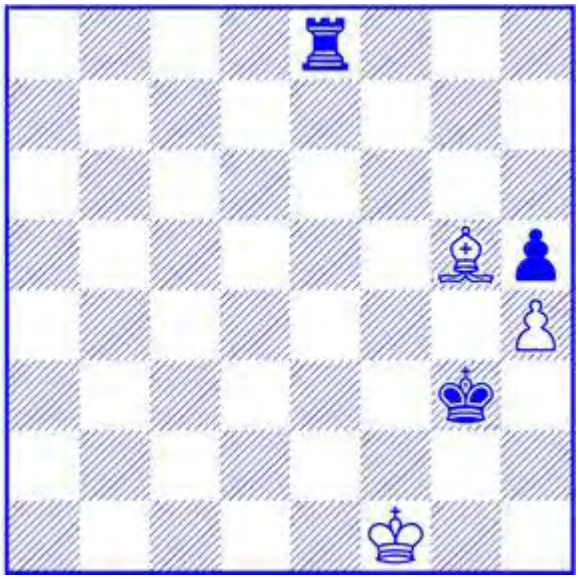
11-30



9 Bh2

If 9 Kh2, then 9…Rf1 10 Bd8 Kg4 11 Kg2 Rf5 12 Bg5 Rf8!⊙ 13 Be7 Re8 14 Bg5 Re2+ 15 Kf1 Kf3 16 Kg1 Kg3! 17 Kf1 Re8!⊙–+.

11-31



This is the decisive zugzwang – Black's goal in all the lines. White cannot maintain the h4-pawn. The resulting position is lost for him in spite of the safe corner, because the black pawn has not crossed the middle line.

9…Rf1 10 Bg3 Rh1+ 11 Bh2 Ke4! 12 Kg2 Rd1! 13 Bc7

The same is 13 Bg1 Kf4! 14 Bc5 Kg4 15 Be7 Re1 16 Bg5 Re2+ 17 Kf1 Kf3 18 Kg1 Kg3 19 Kf1 Re8!⊙–+; 13 Bg3 Kf5 14 Kf3 Rd3+ 15 Kg2 Kg4 16 Be1 Rb3 17 Bf2 Rb2 18 Kf1 Kf3 is also hopeless.

13…Rd7! 14 Ba5 (14 Bb8 Kf5 15 Kf3 Rd3+ 16 Kg2 Kg4) **14…Kf4 15 Bc3 Kg4 16 Bf6 Rf7 17 Bd8 Rf5 18 Bg5 Rf8!⊙ 19 Be7 Re8 20 Bg5 Re2+ 21 Kf1 Kf3 22 Kg1 Kg3 23 Kf1 Re8!⊙–+**

Now let us look at what actually happened in the game.

1…Rf7 2 Bh6 Rf3+ 3 Kg2 Rd3? (3…Rf7! △ Kd3–+) **4 Bg5?** (4 Kf2!) **Kf5?**

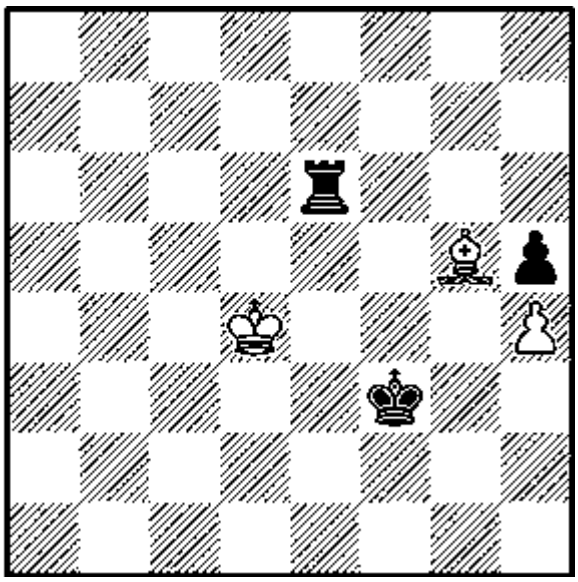
He had to move the rook back: 4…Rf3!. Now the white king breaks loose and the position becomes drawn.

5 Kf2 Kg4 6 Ke2! Rf3 7 Bh6 Kg3 8 Bg5 Rf8 9 Ke3 Re8+ 10 Kd3 Kf3 11 Kd4 Re6

11…Re4+ 12 Kd3 Rg4 13 Kd2 Kg3 14 Ke1; White defended against the exchange sacrifice in time.

11-32

W?



12 Kd5?

The decisive error! As Baranov proved in 1954, White should not be afraid of having his king driven back one more file; therefore he had to play 12 Kd3! Rd6+ 13 Kc3. Subsequent attempts to drive it back will not succeed if White simply avoids placing the kings on the same rank. After 13…Rd7, both 14 Kc2 and 14 Kc4 are possible.

For example, 14 Kc2 there follows 14…Ke2 15 Kc3 Rd3+ 16 Kc4! (rather than 16 Kc2? Rg3 17 Kb2 Kd1!). Or 14 Kc4, then 14…Ke4 (14…Kg3 15 Kc3 Rd1 16 Bf6 Rh1 17 Kd2 R×h4 18 B×h4+ K×h4 19 Ke2 Kg3 20 Kf1=) 15 Kc3 Rd3+ and now 16 Kc2!=, rather than 16 Kc4? Rg3 17 Bf6 (17 Kb4 R×g5! 18 hg Kf5) 17…Rg6 18 Be7 Rc6+.

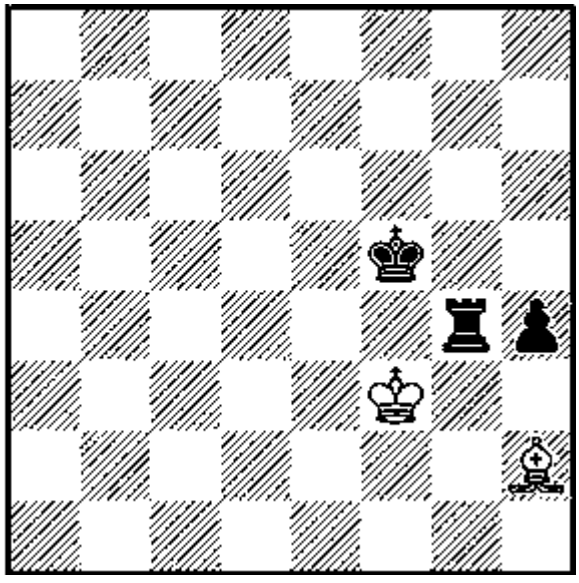
12…Re4 13 Bf6 Kf4 14 Bd8 Kf5 15 Bg5 Rg4 (△ …R×g5) **16 Be7 Rg7 17 Bf8 Rd7+ 18 Kc6** (18 Kc4 Kg4) **18…Rd4** (a simpler way was 18…Rf7! followed by 19…Kg4) **19 Be7 Ke6** (19…Kg4 20 Kc5 Rd3 21 Kc4 Rh3 22 Kd4 R×h4 23 Ke3 Rh2) **20 Kc5 Rd5+ 21 Kc4 Rf5! 22 Bd8 Kd7! 23 Bb6** (23 Bg5 R×g5) **23…Rf4+ 24 Kd3 R×h4**

The outcome seems to be clear after the loss of the pawn, but both sides err in the remainder of the game.

25 Ke2 Ke6 26 Kf3 Rg4 27 Bf2 Kf5 28 Bg3 h4 29 Bh2

11-33

B



29…Rb4??

Correct was 29…h3 △ …Rg2+–.

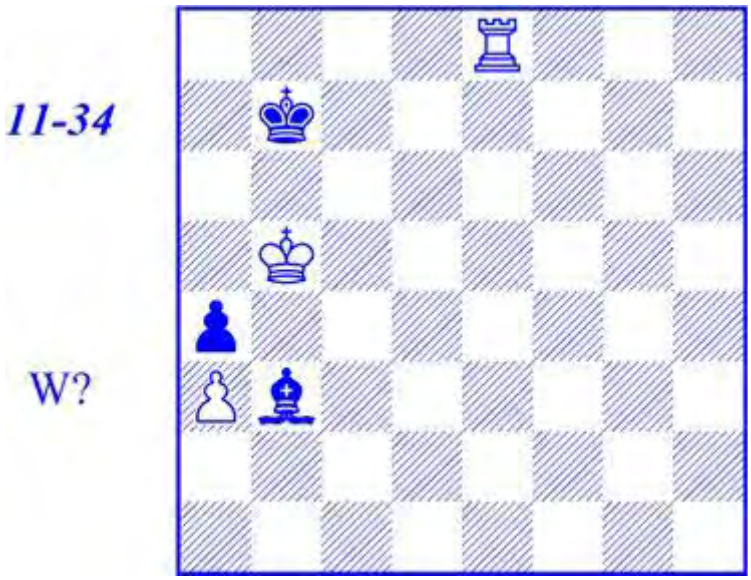
30 Kg2 Kg4 31 Be5 Ra4 32 Bd6 Ra2+ 33 Kh1 Kh3 34 Bc5??

As we know, 34 Kg1! Rg2+ 35 Kf1 would have led to a draw.

34…Ra1+ 35 Bg1 Kg4 36 Kh2 Ra2+ 37 Kh1 Kg3 38 Bc5 Rh2+ 39 Kg1 Rd2! 40 Kh1 h3 White resigned.

Kasparov – Yusupov

Linares 1993

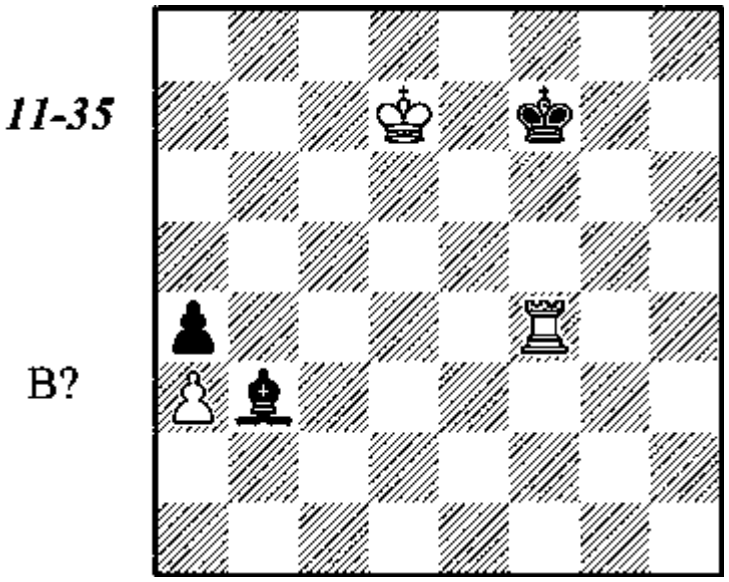


The logic of the previous example can be applied here: the correct plan is to play for zugzwang rather than driving the king off.

1 Rd8! Kc7 2 Rd4⊙ Kb7 3 Rd7+ Kc8 4 Kc6 Bc2 5 Rd4 Bb3 (5…Kb8 6 Kb6+–) **6 Kb6⊙+–**

Kasparov did not find this plan, and the game ended in a draw.

1 Re7+? Kc8 2 Kc6 Kd8! 3 Rd7+ Ke8 4 Kc7 Bc2 5 Rd2 Bb3 6 Re2+ Kf7 7 Kd6 Bc4 8 Re7+ Kf8 9 Re4 Bb3 10 Kd7 Kf7 11 Rf4+



11…Kg6!

It is important to come nearer to the rook as 11…Kg7? loses to 12 Kc6 Kg6 13 Kb5 Kg5 14 R×a4.

12 Kd6 Kg5 13 Ke5 Kg6 14 Rf3 Kg7 15 Rf6 Bc4 16 Kf5 Bb3 17 Kg5 Bc2 Draw.

The position with the black pawn on a3 and the bishop on b2 arose in the game Timman-Velimirovic (Rio de Janeiro izt 1979). Its assessment, as established by the Dutch grandmaster,

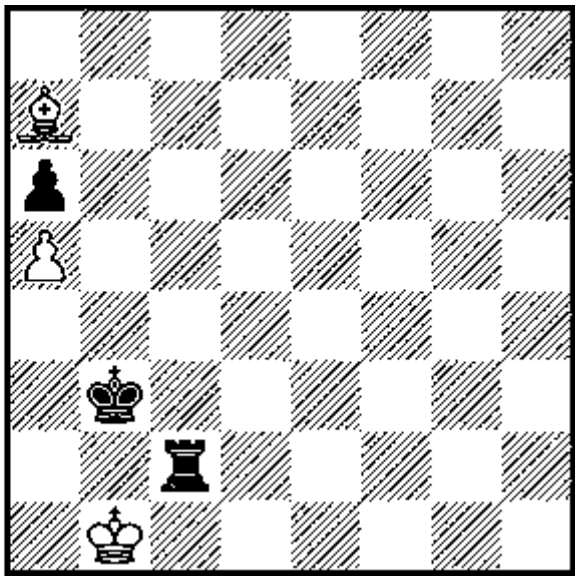
depends on the placement of the black king. The probability of its occurrence in a practical game is rather low, while the lines are quite complicated, so we will not consider analyzing it.

Tragicomedies

Bellón – Tatai
Rome 1977

11-36
$

B?



Recalling the Kasparov-Yusupov endgame, we can find the solution easily: 1…Rc6! (or 1…Rc7!) 2 Bb6 (2 Bb8 Rc5; 2 Be3 Re6 3 Bd2 Rf6) 2…Rd6 3 Kc1 Rd5!⊙–+.

1…Rh2?!

In *Chess Informant* 25, Milic awarded this move an exclamation mark.

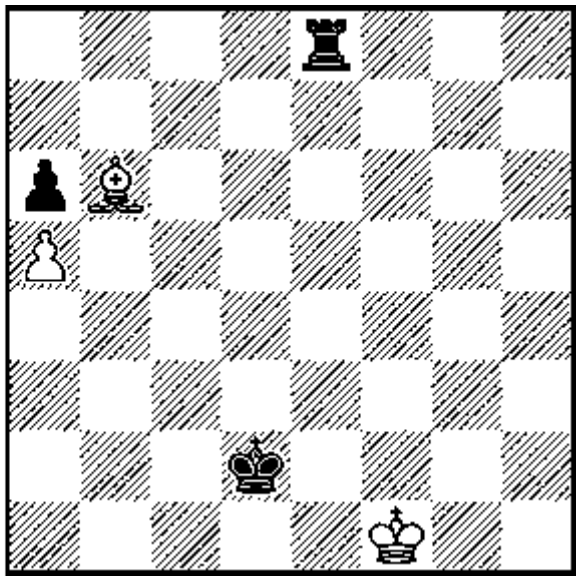
2 Kc1 Kc3?

It was still not too late to return to the correct plan, 2…Rh5! 3 Bb6 Rd5!.

3 Kd1= Rd2+ 4 Ke1 Kd3 5 Bb6 Rh2 6 Bd8 Rh1+ 7 Kf2 Rh8 8 Bb6 Re8 9 Kf1 Kd2

11-37

W?



10 Bc5?

A mistake in return, unnoticed by both *Chess Informant* and *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings*. The correct defensive method, as demonstrated by Yusupov against Kasparov, was 10 Kg2(f2)! Rf8 11 Kg3 Kc3 12 Kg4 Kb4 13 Kg5! (or 13 Bc7! – it is important not to let the rook to f5) 13…Rf1 14 Kg4 Ra1 15 Kf3 R×a5 16 B×a5+ K×a5 17 Ke2=.

10…Re5! 11 Bb4+

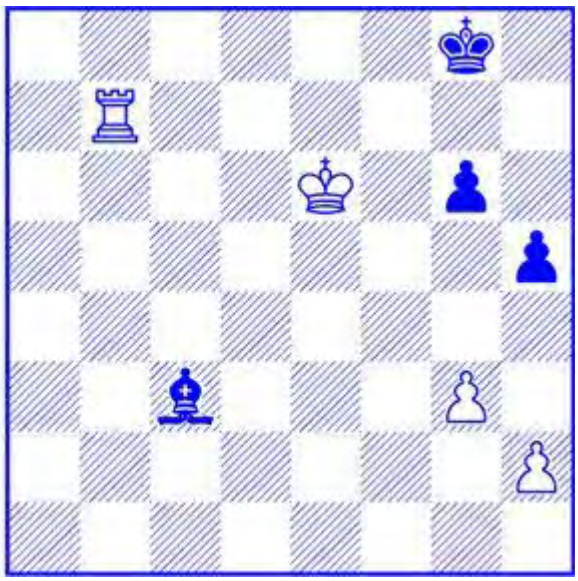
Or 11 Bb6 Rf5+! 12 Kg2 Kc3 13 Kg3 Kb4 14 Kg4 R×a5–+.

11…Kd3 12 Kf2 Rb5 13 Be1 Rf5+ (13…Rb1!, winning the bishop) **14 Kg3 Ke2 15 Kg4** (15 Bb4 Rb5 16 Bc3 Rb3) **15…Rc5!** White resigned.

Two Pawns vs. Two on the Same Wing

First the most important position that everybody should know

11-38



W

This is an elementary fortress; White cannot breach the barrier. If the king returns to f4, Black takes g5 under control by means of Bf6. An advance of pawns brings no change.

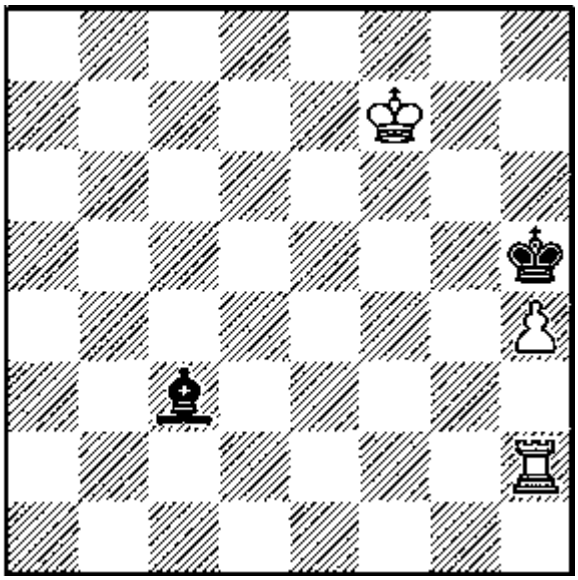
Why is this position so important? It is rather simple but delivers plenty of useful information. For example, it tells us what to do when the black pawn stands on h7. Then h7-h5! is essential, while White, when he is on move, should prevent this advance by means of g3-g4!. Moreover, the evaluation of the diagrammed position extends automatically to a number of related situations that occur after a pawn exchange on g4, when Black remains with a g6-pawn against White's g- or h-pawn. The position with the white g5- and h4-pawns against Black's g6- and h5-pawns is also drawn.

The only possible attempt to set problems for Black, a rook transfer to the g-file after an exchange of pawns (g3 against h5), can be parried by correct defense.

1 h4!? Ba1! 2 Rb4 Kg7! 3 g4 hg 4 R×g4 Kh6 5 Rg5 (5 Kf7 Kh5) **5…Bd4 6 Kf7 Bf2 7 R×g6+ Kh5**=

In case of 1…Bd4?, White plays 2 Rb4 with tempo, and this fact turns out to be decisive. After 2…Bc3 3 Rc4 Bb2 (4…Be1 5 Kf6 Kh7 6 Rc6! B×g3 7 Kg5+–) 4 g4 hg 5 R×g4 Kh7 (5…Kg7 6 h5) 6 Kf7 Kh6 7 R×g6+ Kh5 8 Rg2! Bc3 9 Rh2

11-39



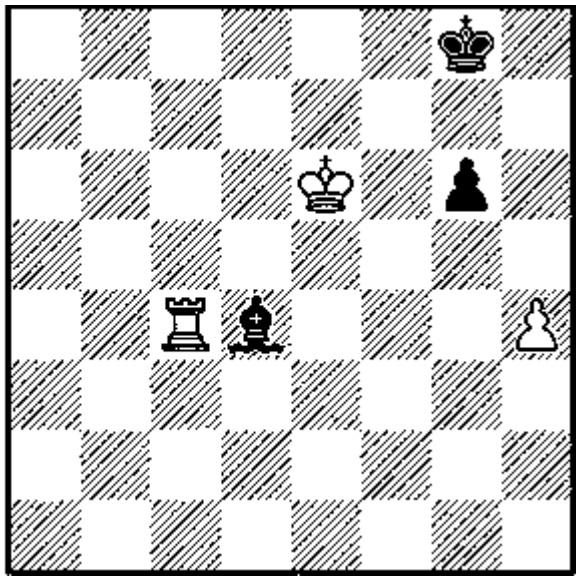
B

9…Bd4 (9…Be1 10 Kf6 B×h4+ 11 Kf5⊙) 10 Ke6 Bg1 11 Rh1 Bf2 12 Kf5, we come to a theoretical position that is won for White, although the proof is very complicated: the main line lasts some twenty moves!

Let us check another method of exploiting the same idea; a frontal rook attack against the g6-pawn.

1 Kd5 Bf6 2 Ke4 Bc3 3 Kf4 Bf6 4 g4!? hg 5 K×g4 Be5 6 h3 Bf6 7 Kf4 Kf8 8 Ke4 Kg8 9 Kd5 Ba1 10 Ke6 Bc3 11 Rc7 Bb2 12 h4 Bd4 13 Rc4

11-40
$
B?

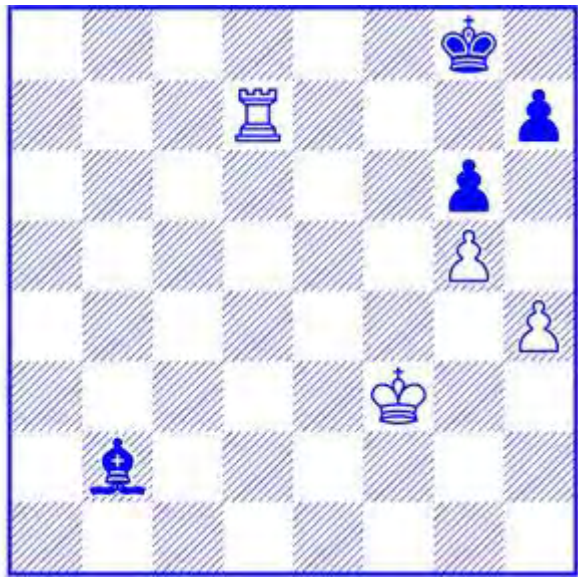


A key moment; this position (with reversed colors) happened in a grandmaster duel at a 1987 tournament in New York. Ftacnik played against Murey as follows: 13…Bb2? 14 Rg4 Kh7 15 Kf7, and White won (see the line 1 h4 Bd4?). 13…Bf2? 14 Kf6 Kh7 15 Rg4 Kh6 16 R×g6+ Kh5 17 Rg2+– is no better.

Black should have played **13…Be3! 14 Kf6** (14 Re4 Bd2 15 Re2 Bc3) **14…Kh7 15 Rg4Kh6 16 R×g6+ Kh5 17 Rg3 Bb6!! 18 Rh3 Kg4! 19 Rh1 Bd8+** with a draw.

Khalifman – Leko
Budapest m (3), 2000

11-41
B



This pawn structure has occurred many times in practice and, up to the present day, was always evaluated as drawn. In fact, White wins by means of h4-h5, transposing to the Elkies position (diagram 11-24), although everything is not so simple – there are many subtle points in this ending.

1…Bg7!

Leko is trying to oppose White's plan. If 2 Kg4? then 2…h5+! 3 Kf4 Bb2 or 3 gh B×h6 with an

obvious draw.

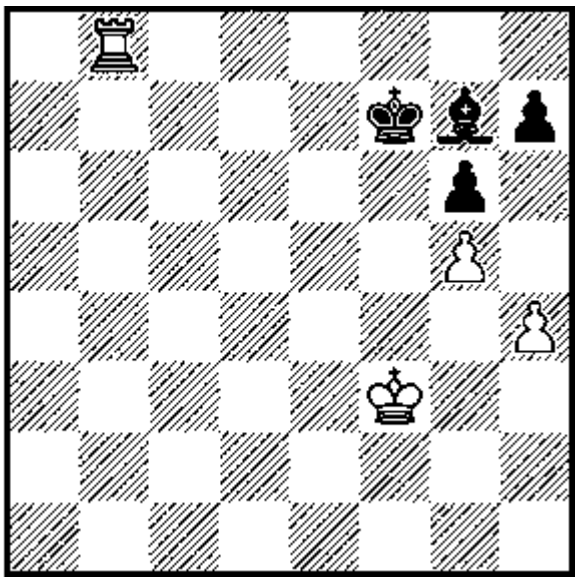
1…Bc1, with the same idea, is worse on account of 2 Rd1 Bb2 2 Rd8+ Kg7 3 Rd7+ Kg8 4 Kg4.

2 Kf4

This is not a bad move, however the most direct way to a victory starts with 2 Rd8+!? Kf7 3 Rb8.

11-42

B



(a) 3…h5 4 Rb7+ Kg8 5 R×g7+! K×g7 6 Ke4 Kf7 7 Kd5+–;

(b) 3…h6 4 Rb7+ Kg8 5 Ke4 (5 R×g7+? K×g7 6 Ke4 is premature in view of 6…Kf7 7 Kd5 Ke7! 8 gh Kf7= or 8 Ke5 h5=) 5…hg 6 R×g7+! K×g7 7 hg Kf7 8 Kd5+–;

(c) 3…Bc3 4 Rb7+ Kg8 5 Kg4 △ 6 h5+–;

(d) 3…Ke7 4 h5! gh 5 Rb6 Kf7 6 Kg3 △ Kh4xh5+–;

(e) 3…Bf8 4 Rb7+ (4 h5? gh 5 Rb6 fails on account of 5…Kg8! 6 Kg3 h6! 7 gh Kh7 8 Kh4 B×h6 9 K×h5 Bd2=) 4…Kg8 5 Kg4! (△ 6 h5+–) 5…h5+ 6 Kf3! (rather than 6 Kf4? Bd6+ 7 Ke4 Bg3). Black could have held this position if he had been able to bring the bishop to the a1-h8 diagonal, but all the roads to it are cut off: 6…Bg7 7 R×g7+!; 6…Bd6 7 Rb6; 6…Ba3 7 Ke4 △ Ke5-f6; 6…Bc5 7 Ke4 Bf2 8 Ke5 B×h4 9 Kf6+–.

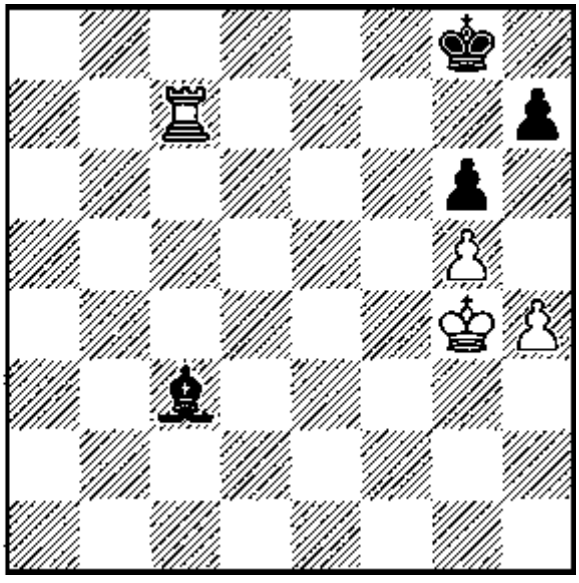
2…Bf8

If 2…Kf8, then 3 Rd8+! Kf7 4 Rb8.

2…Bb2 is met by 3 Kg4. Now 3…Bg7? only accelerates the loss: 4 h5 gh+ 5 K×h5 Kf8 (5…Bc3 6 Kh6; 5…Bf8 6 g6) 6 Rb7⊙ Kg8 7 g6. In case of 3…Bc3, White can play 4 h5 right away, but let us look at a somewhat abstract move, 4 Rc7, that leads to a position from Wolff-Browne, USA ch, Durango 1992.

11-43

B



Where should the bishop go? We know from the previous note that 4…Bg7? 5 h5 is bad; 4…Bd4? 5 h5 gh+ 6 K×h5 (△ 7 Kh6) is no better, because the bishop fails to enter the a3-f8 diagonal. The toughest resistance can be rendered by 4…Bb2 5 h5 gh+ 6 K×h5 Ba3, and White has to demonstrate a truly complicated winning procedure that, by the way, had not yet been discovered when the game was played.

Browne played 4…Be5?, and Wolff managed to carry out h4-h5 in a more favorable situation, avoiding the Elkies position. The main motif is making the access of the bishop to the a3-f8 diagonal most difficult.

5 Rc6! Bb2 6 Ra6 Bc3 (6…Bd4 7 Ra5 Bc3 8 Ra4 does not change anything) 7 Ra4! Be5 (7…Bg7 8 Ra8+ Kf7 9 Ra7+ Kg8 10 h5) 8 h5! gh+

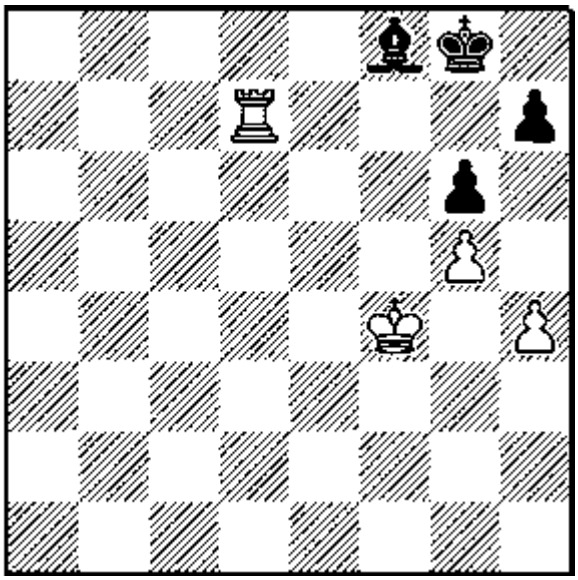
In the game, Black allowed h5-h6 and, of course, lost rapidly: 8…Bc3 9 h6 Kf7 10 Rc4 Be5 11 Kf3 Bd6 12 Rc8 Ke6 13 Rh8 Kf5 14 R×h7 K×g5 15 Rd7 Black resigned.

9 K×h5 Bd6

The bishop has finally managed to reach the key diagonal, but it stands badly on d6. White carries g5-g6 out while the black king's refuge in the dangerous corner fails.

10 Ra8+ Kg7 11 Ra7+ Kg8 12 g6 hg+ 13 K×g6 Kf8 14 Kf6 (here the bad placement of the bishop tells: after 14…Ke8, White plays 15 Ke6 with a tempo) 14…Kg8 15 Rg7+ Kh8 (15…Kf8 16 Rd7) 10 Kg6+–.

11-44



W

3 h5?

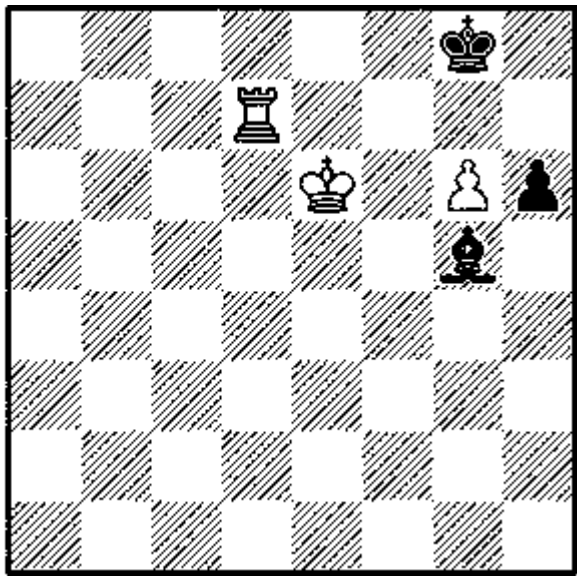
White advances the pawn at the most inappropriate moment. The simplest solution was 3 Ra7!? Bg7 4 Rb7! Bf8 5 Kg4 h5+ 6 Kf3+– (see line (e) in the annotation to White's second move.) As Shipov noted, the immediate 3 Kg4 also wins, but after 3…h5+, White should play 4 Kf3! Bb4 (4…Bg7 5 R×g7+; 4…Ba3 5 Rb7 Bd6 6 Rb6) 5 Rc7! (preventing 5…Bc3) 5…Be1 6 Rc4 Kf7 7 Ke3 △ Kd3, Re4, Kc4-d5+– rather than 4 Kf4? Ba3 (△ 5…Bb2=) 5 Rb7 Bd6+ 6 Ke4 Bg3 7 Rb3 B×h4 8 Kf4 Kf7 9 Rb7+ Kg8=.

3…gh 4 Kg3 h6! 5 g6 Ba3 6 Kh4 Bc1

As we know from the Elkies's analysis, this position is drawn.

7 K×h5 Bg5 8 Kg4 Bc1 9 Kf5 Bg5 10 Ke6 (10 g7 Kh7 11 Ke6 Kg8)

11-45
$



B

10…Bh4?!

10…Be3 is simpler; if 11 Rh7 Bd2 12 g7, then 12…Bc3 or 12…Bg5.

11 Rh7 Bg5 12 g7!? h5□

A study-like salvation! All other moves lose: 12…K×h7? 13 Kf7; 12…Bd8? 13 Rh8+; 12…Bh4? 13 R×h6; 12…Be3? 13 Kf6.

13 R×h5 Bf6!

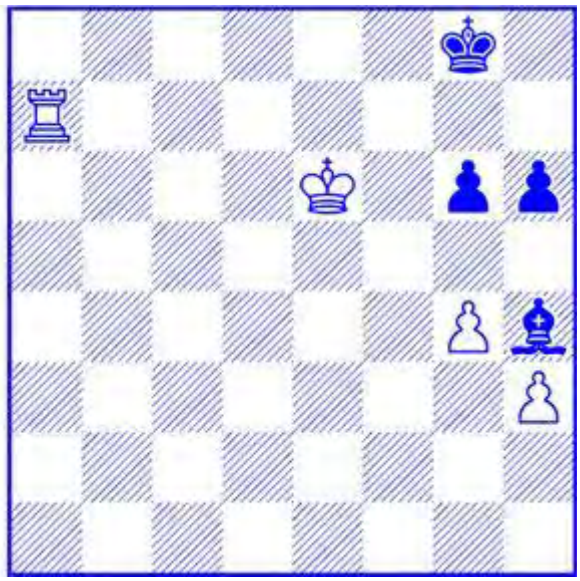
The bishop is taboo in view of stalemate. The g7-pawn will be lost, and White cannot reach the basic winning position with the king in the dangerous corner.

14 Rh3 B×g7 15 Ke7 Bb2 16 Rb3 Bd4 17 Rd3 Bb2 18 Rg3+ Kh7 19 Ke6 Kh6 20 Kf5 Kh7 21 Rg6 Bc3 22 Kg5 Bb2 23 Kh5 Bc3 24 Rg2 Bd4 25 Rd2 Bc3 26 Rc2 Ba1 27 Rc7+ Kg8 28 Rd7 Draw.

Even if White succeeds in preventing a fortress such as in diagram 11-29 by playing g2-g4 at the proper moment, Black still can hold if he builds another elementary fortress.

Olafsson – Larsen
Las Palmas 1974

11-46



B

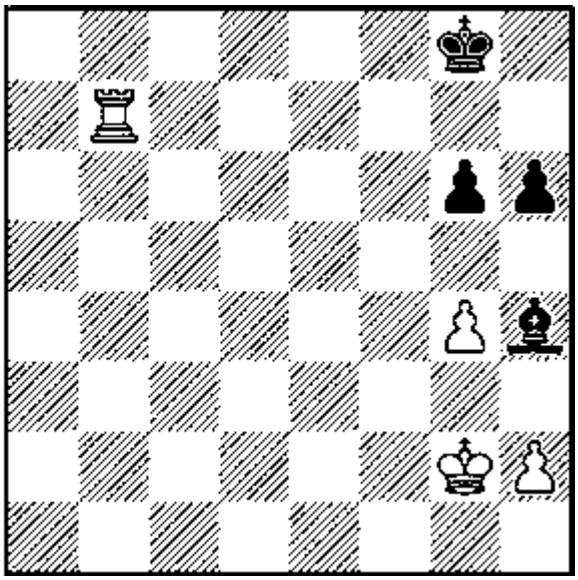
This barrier is also not to be breached.

1…Bg5 2 Ra5 Bh4 (but surely not 2…Kg7? 2 R×g5 hg 3 Ke7+–) **3 Ra1 Bg5 4 Ra4** (4 Rh1 Bh4!) **4…Kg7 5 Ra7+ Kg8 6 Rf7 Kh8 7 Ke5** (7 Rf6 Kg7) **7…Kg8**, and the game ended in a draw.

Would the evaluation of the position be changed with the white pawn on h2 instead of h3? In

such cases, White has the following way to play for a win: the king comes to h3 and drives the bishop away from h4, then Kg3 and h2-h4-h5 follow. I have seen analysis of this situation only in a two-volume endgame treatise by Villeneuve (in French, 1984).

11-47
$
W



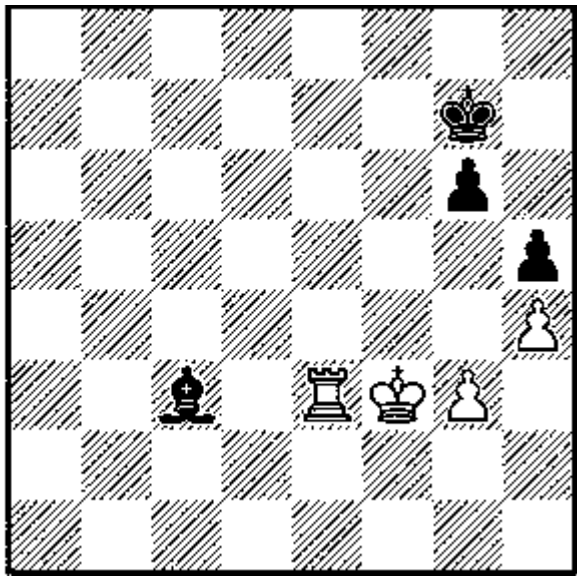
1 Kh3 Bf2 (1…Bf6!?) **2 Rb2 Bd4 3 Re2 Bf6** (or 3…Kg7 4 Kg3 Bf6!) **4 Kg3 Kg7 5 h4** (5 Re6 Kf7 6 Ra6 Be5+) **5…h5! 6 gh** (6 g5 Bc3, transposing to the main fortress as in diagram 11-38) **6…gh**

It seems that Black achieves a draw. For example, 7 Re4 Kg6 8 Kf3 Kf5 9 Rf4+ Ke5 10 Ke3 Bd8 etc.

Tragicomedies

Smyslov – Chiburdanidze
Monaco 1994

11-48
B



1…Bd2?

Chiburdanidze obviously did not know the basic drawn position, otherwise she would have kept the bishop on the main diagonal: 1…Bf6=.

2 Rd3 Be1?

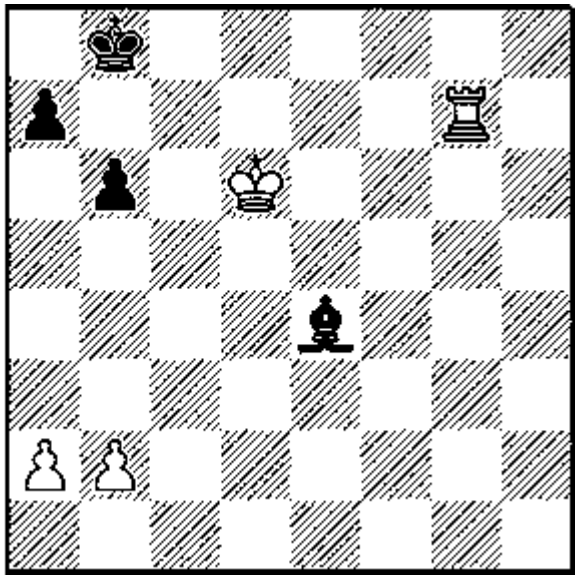
2…Bc1! (△ 3…Bb2) 3 Rb3 g5 would have held out longer; but as Karsten Müller indicated, White would still win by continuing 4 Rb1 Bd2 5 Rb7+ Kg6 6 Rb6+ Kg7 7 Ke2 Ba5 8 Rb5 Bd8 9 Rd5 Bf6 10 hg, etc.

3 Kf4+– Kf6 4 Rd6+ Kf7 5 Kg5 B×g3 6 Rf6+ Ke7 7 R×g6 Be1 8 K×h5 Kf7 9 Rg2 Kf6 10

Re2 Bg3 11 Re4 Black resigned.

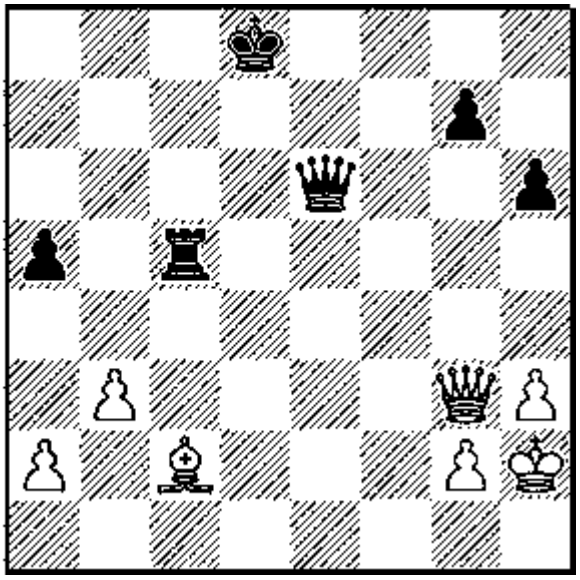
Exercises

11-49



11/7
W?

11-50



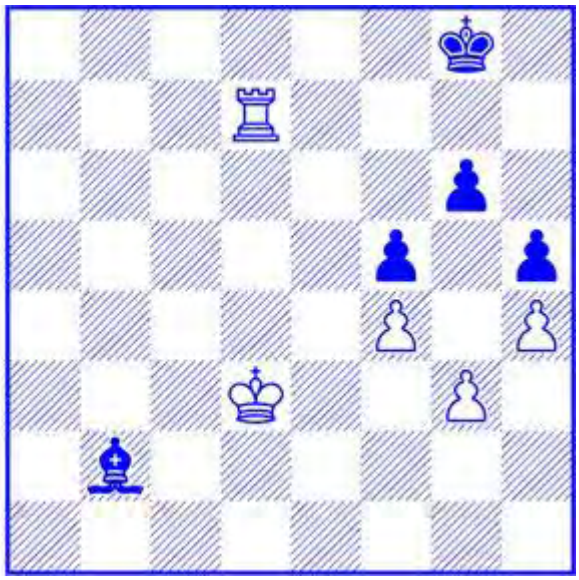
11/8
W?

Three Pawns vs. Three on the Same Wing

With three pawns on each side, a fortress, as a rule, cannot be built. Salvation is possible only in exceptional cases, when the pawn structure of the stronger side has flaws.

Radev – Pribyl
Tbilisi 1971

11-51



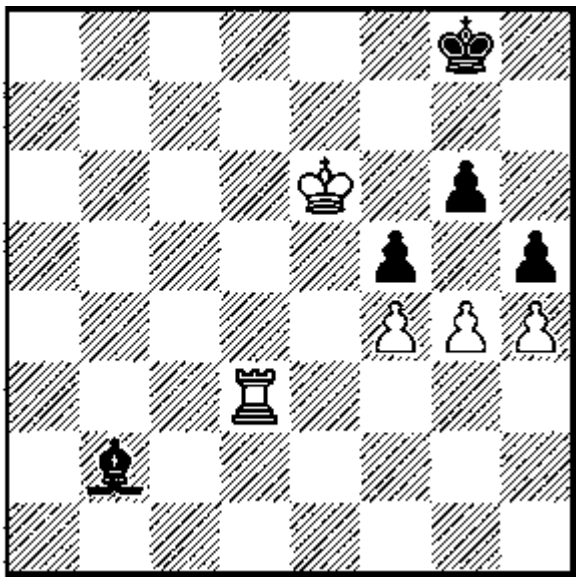
W

This situation resembles diagram 11-38, only the f-pawns are added. It again seems as if White cannot overcome the barrier, but in fact he can by means of a spectacular pawn breakthrough.

Two years later, a similar endgame occurred in a game Kholmov-Tseshkovsky, USSR chsf 1973. Grandmaster Kholmov wrote a detailed analysis, which was published in a periodical, and I reproduce it here in a slightly abridged and corrected form.

1 Kc4 Kf8 2 Kd5 Kg8 3 Ke6 Bc3 4 Rd3! Bb2 5 g4!!+–

11-52



B

The game continued:

5…hg?! 6 h5 Kg7

Or 6…gh 7 K×f5 Kg7 (7…Bc1 8 Kg6 Kf8 9 f5) 8 Rd7+ Kh6 (8…Kg8 9 Kg6; 8…Kf8 9 Rh7) 9 Rd6+ Kh7 (9…Kg7 10 Rg6+ Kh7 11 Kg5 Bc1 12 Rh6+ Kg7 13 R×h5 g3 14 Rh3) 10 Kg5 Bc1 11 Rd7+ Kg8 12 Kg6 Kf8 13 f5 g3 14 f6+–.

7 hg K×g6 8 Rd5 Bc1

Black still follows the path of least resistance. However a rapid finale also occurs after 8…Kh5: 9 K×f5 Kh4 (9…g3 10 Rd1) 10 Rd6! Bc1 (10…Kh3 11 Rh6+ Kg3 12 Rg6) 11 Rg6+–.

9 R×f5 B×f4 (9…Kh6 10 Ke5 △ 11 Rg5) 10 R×f4 Kg5 11 Ke5 g3 12 Ke4 g2 13 Rf8 Kh4 14 Rg8 Black resigned.

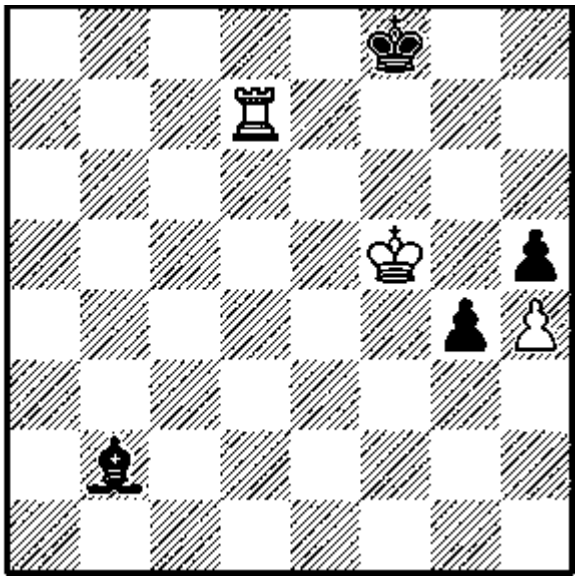
More stubborn is **5…fg!? 6 f5 gf 7 K×f5** (△ 8 Kg6) **7…Kf7 8 Kg5**

An alternative is 8 Rd7+, for example 8…Ke8 9 Rh7 g3 10 R×h5 Bc1 11 Kf6! (rather than 11 Rh7?, in view of the pretty response 11…Bg5!!=) 11…Kd7 (11…g2 12 Rh8+ Kd7 13 Rg8; 11…Bb2+ 12 Ke6) 12 Rd5+ Ke8 (12…Kc6 13 Rd8 △ 14 Rg8) 13 Re5+ Kd7 (13…Kf8 14 Rc5 Bb2+ 15 Kg6) 14 Re4 and 15 Rg4+–.

Black can also try 8…Kf8!?.

11-53

W



Now Nunn's suggestion 9 Rh7? g3 10 R×h5 Bc1 11 Kf6 Kg8 (11…Bb2+? 12 Kg6 Bc1 13 Rf5+ and 14 Rf3) 12 Rc5 Be3 13 Rc7 does not work in view of 13…Bb6! (Nunn examined 13…Bd4+ 14 Kg6 Kf8 15 Rc2) 14 Rg7+ Kf8 15 R×g3 Bd8+ and 16…B×h4=, or 14 Rc2 Kh7! followed by Bf2=. White should play 9 Kg6! g3 10 Rd5 (10 Rf7+!?) 10…Bc1 11 Rd8+!

An important intermediate check that prevents the bishop from accessing e3 in the future. Kholmov analyzed solely 11 Rd3, but after 11…Bf4, White has neither 12 Rf3? g2 13 R×f4+ Kg8= nor 12 Rd1? Be3= (however 12 Rd8+ Ke7 13 Rd1 is still playable).

11…Ke7 12 Rd1 Ba3 (12…Be3?? 13 Re1; 12…Bf4!?) 13 Rg1 (13 K×h5? Bc5=) 13…Bd6 14 K×h5 Kf6 15 Kg4+–. This position can be achieved much more rapidly after 8 Kg5, and we now return to this move.

8…Be5 9 K×h5 g3 10 Rd2 Kf6 11 Kg4 Kg6 12 Re2 Bb8 13 h5+ Kh6 14 Re6+ Kh7 15 Rg6 Bc7 16 Kf5 Bb8

Kholmov proceeds with 17 h6 and demonstrates a win after 10 more moves. But **17 Rb6!** wins immediately.

If the pawns are still not in contact (for example, Black's pawns f7, g6, and h5; White's pawns on their initial squares), the winning procedure is easier. If Black has a white-square bishop that protects the f7-pawn, White comes with his king to e7, places the rook on f6, and advances the pawns (h2-h3, g2-g4, f2-f4-f5).

In the case of a dark-square bishop, the white king goes to e8 and attacks the f7-pawn in order to force its advance. After …f7-f5, White can build the position that we have just seen; but a simpler way is to come back to e6 with the king, bring all the pawns to the third rank and the rook to g2, and finally carry out the advance g3-g4.

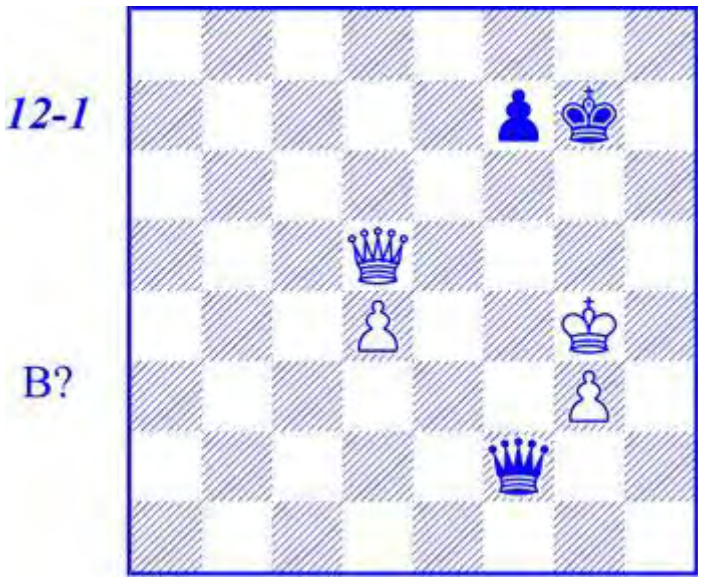
Chapter 12

Queen Endgames

Queen and Pawn vs. Queen

If the defender's king stands in front of the pawn, the draw is usually an easy matter.

Botvinnik – Tal
Moscow wm (12) 1960



1…f5+! 2 Kg5

After 2 Q×f5 Q×d4+, Black's defense is even simpler because his king is already standing in front of the pawn and almost every instance of a queen exchange is acceptable for him.

2…Q×g3+ 3 K×f5 Qg6+ 4 Kf4 Qf6+ 5 Ke3 Kf8! 6 Kd3

If Tal had played 6…Ke7 here, there would have been no doubt about a draw. What he did instead made his task more complicated.

6…Qf1+ 7 Ke4 Qg2+?! (7…Ke7!=) **8 Ke5 Qg5+ 9 Ke6 Qe7+ 10 Kf5**

If 10…Qf7(h7)+, then 11 Ke5. After 11…Qh5+? (11…Qe7+ is better) 12 Kd6, Black cannot trade queens, the checks will soon expire, and his king will be forced to the g-file, farther from the pawn.

10…Qc7!

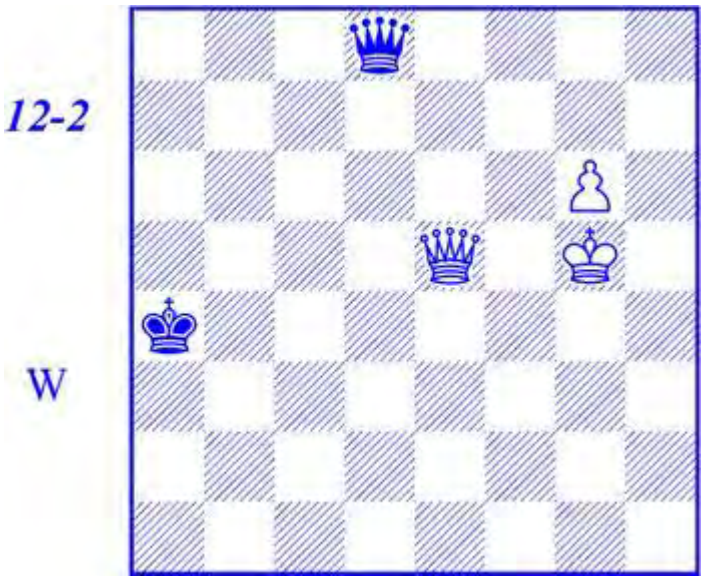
"However strange it may seem, Black evidently has secured the draw only with this move … Now White's pieces are ideally placed; any move will just worsen his position." (Tal).

11 Qa8+ Ke7 12 Qe4+ Kd8 13 Qh4+ Kc8 14 Qh8+ Kb7 15 Qe5 Qf7+ 16 Ke4 Qg6+ 17 Qf5 Qd6! 18 Qf7+ Kc8 19 Qf5+ Kd8 20 Qa5+ Ke8 21 d5 Ke7 22 Qa7+ Kd8 23 Qa8+ Kd7 24 Kf5 Ke7 Draw.

Now we come to those exceptionally complicated cases when the king of the weaker side is placed far away from the pawn. Computers have proved that a win, when it exists, can often be achieved (when both sides play correctly) only after more than 50 moves! Practical players should not delve too deeply into this jungle, for these endings occur quite seldom. We shall confine ourselves to basic theoretical statements and the most important practical methods.

Botvinnik was the first to find the correct method for the stronger side, during an analysis of the following adjourned game:

Botvinnik – Minev
Amsterdam ol 1954



1 Qf6

1 Kh6? Qh4+ 2 Kg7 is much weaker, as Botvinnik played in an identical position against Ravinsky eight years earlier. ***One should not place his king in front of his pawn.***

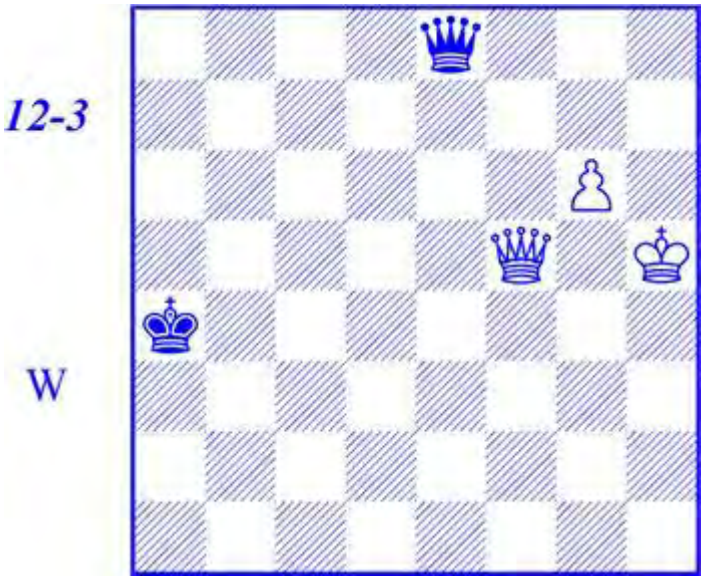
According to computer analysis, 1 Kf5! is more precise; if 1…Qc8+ (this position had already occurred on a previous move), then 2 Kf4! Qc1+ 3 Qe3 Qc7+ 4 Kg4 Qd7+ 5 Kh4 Qd8+ 6 Kg3 (there are no checks anymore; 6…Qd6+ loses to 7 Qf4+), or 5…Qg7 6 Kg5 etc. (this "etc.," by the way, lasts more than 20 moves at least).

1…Qd5+ 2 Qf5 Qd8+ 3 Kh5

The stronger side should place the king on the same file or rank where the defender's king is standing, or an adjacent file or rank (this rule is also valid when more pawns are present on the board).

This tactic often enables counter-checks when the queen provides protection from a defender's check by interference. For example, now Black cannot play 3…Qd1+ in view of 4 Qg4+, or 3…Qh8+ 4 Kg4, and Black cannot play 4…Qd4+ because of 5 Qf4, as 4…Qg7 loses to 5 Qf7! Qc3 6 g7!.

3…Qe8



4 Qf4+?

An error that was left unnoticed by Botvinnik. The computer analysis shows that the correct winning process is 4 Kg4! Qe2+ 5 Kf4 Qd2+ 6 Ke5 Qb2+ 7 Kd6 Qb8+ 8 Ke7 Qb4+ 9 Kf7 Qb7+ 10 Kf6 Qb6+ 11 Qe6 (this is only an introduction: a lot of precise moves are still required for achieving success).

But why is the move actually played wrong? Because, ***when dealing with a knight or rook***

pawn, the defender's king is best placed near the corner that is diametrically opposite to the pawn promotion square. Then, when the stronger side defends his king from checks with a queen interference, a counter-check is less probable.

Black could have played 4…Ka3! here and theory says that it is a draw, although it is a long way from a theoretical evaluation to a half-point in the tournament table, because these positions are very difficult to defend.

We should add that ***the indicated drawing zone does not exist in case of a bishop or central pawn***. One can only expect that the opponent's play will not be precise (although defender's errors are more probable in these situations) or … that the king manages to reach the area in front of the pawn like in the Botvinnik-Tal endgame.

By the way, ***the drawing zone, near the pawn, is considerably larger with a rook pawn, compared with other pawns, because the defender can go for a queen exchange much more often***.

Having arrived at general considerations about various pawn cases, I add two more remarks:

(a) The farther the pawn is advanced, the less the defender's chance for a draw;

(b) The closer the pawn is to the edge of the board, the greater the drawing chances. With central and bishop pawns, practically all positions with a remote king are lost. With a knight pawn, winning positions occur very often. With a rook pawn, a draw can be reached in a majority of positions, although the defense is not simple.

4…Ka5?

The wrong way! But this choice was not made purely by chance. The above-mentioned game Botvinnik-Ravinsky had been thoroughly annotated by Keres, and the Estonian grandmaster erroneously suggested keeping the king on a5 and a4.

5 Qd2+ Ka4 6 Qd4+ Ka5 7 Kg5

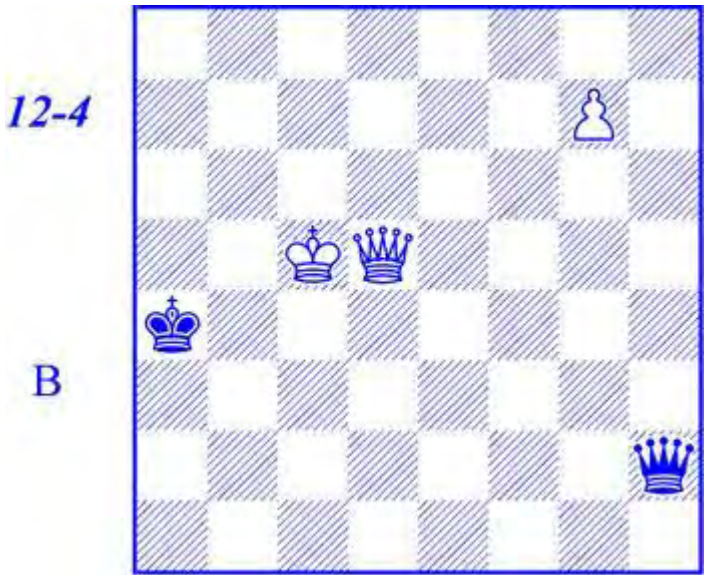
Take notice of White's last moves. ***The queen is placed best on the central squares (this is usually valid for the defender's queen as well). The closer the queen is to the edge of the board, the winning process is more difficult and the probability of a perpetual check is higher***.

By the way, now we can easily explain why Botvinnik's 1 Qf6 was less accurate than 1 Kf5!. His queen should not leave the center unless it is an emergency.

7…Qe7+ 8 Kf5! Qf8+ 9 Ke4 Qh6 10 Qe5+ Ka4 11 g7

Finally the pawn succeeds in moving forward, and the finale is near. The finish is also very instructive: White approaches the black king with his monarch in order to create a situation when every check can be met with a counter-check. This method (***king-to-king***) is characteristic for queen-and-pawn endings.

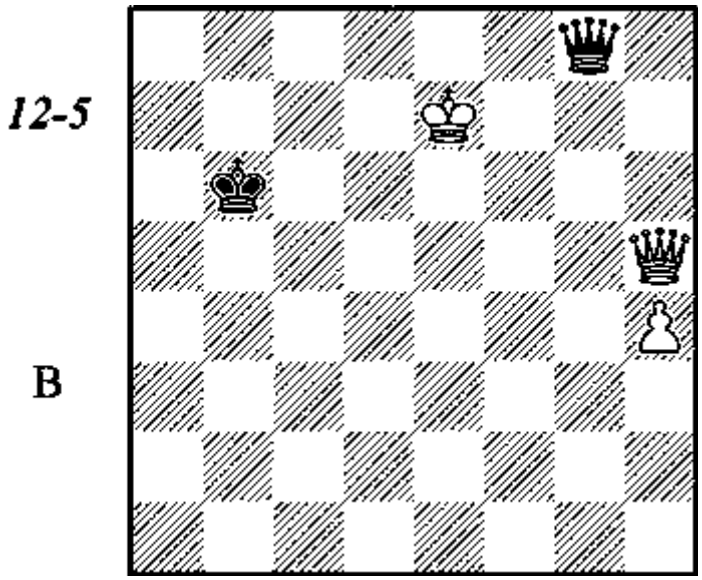
11…Qh1+ 12 Kd4 Qd1+ 13 Kc5 Qc1+ 14 Kd6 (14 Kd5?! Qc8) **14…Qd2+** (14…Qh6+ 15 Kd5!) **15 Ke6 Qa2+ 16 Qd5 Qe2+ 17 Kd6 Qh2+ 18 Kc5!**



Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Shamkovich – Wirthensohn
Biel 1980



We shall not go deeply into intricate lines. Instead, we merely want to match the computer evaluations of the actual moves with the general considerations that are already known to us from the annotations to the previous example. Because of the rook pawn, Black can hope for a successful defense. And, as a matter of fact, the position was still drawn after 1…Qg3 or 1…Qc4.

1…Qg7+?

This move would have made sense if the series of checks could continue. However, the white king is superbly placed on the rank adjacent to its adversary, and not even one single check will be possible after White's reply. Hence Black's move is bad. It allows White to rescue his queen from boredom with tempo.

2 Qf7!+– **Qg3** (2…Qe5+? 3 Qe6+) **3 Qf6+ Kc7 4 Qg5?**

Shamkovich only worsens the position of his queen, moving it closer to the edge. He should have pushed his pawn in order to obtain a position that can be won in … 69 moves (!).

4…Qa3+ 5 Kf7 Qb3+ 6 Kg7 Qc3+?

A drawn position (not a draw as such – Black would have spent a good deal of sweat for it) could be maintained after a check from b2. It is difficult to explain the choice by general principles, but the black king will get in the queen's way in some lines now.

7 Qf6 Qg3+ 8 Kh7?

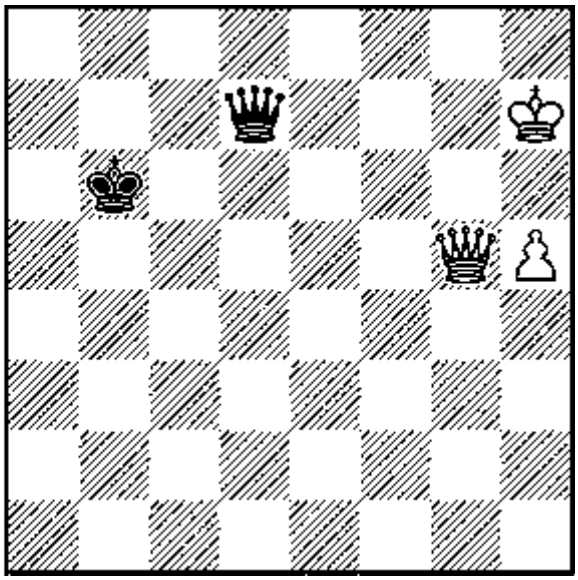
But this is not merely an error; this is neglect of principles. As we have stated, the king should not seek exile in front of the pawn. Both 8 Qg5 and 8 Kf7 are winning, but 8 Kf8! is the most precise.

8…Qh3 9 Qg5 Kb6?

This counter-error is also very instructive. As we know, there is a drawing zone near a rook pawn, and this zone is rather spacious (its precise borders depend on the placement of the pieces, and most importantly on how far advanced the pawn is; we shall not give precise definitions here). The king was already standing in the zone, therefore many queen moves were not losing, but the most logical decision was to go towards the pawn: 9…Kd7(d6)!=.

10 h5 Qd7+

12-6



W

11 Qg7?

White worsens his queen's position. All king moves were winning.

11…Qh3?

The black queen had to guard the central squares. 11…Qd5! was good enough for a draw.

12 Qe5!+–

The white queen has finally arrived in the center, Black's king is out of the drawing zone – White's position is winning!

12…Qd7+ 13 Kg6 Qd3+ 14 Qf5 Qg3+ 15 Kf7 Qc7+ 16 Kg8 Qb8+ 17 Kg7 Qc7+ 18 Qf7 Qh2 19 h6 Ka5 20 h7 Qe5+ 21 Qf6 Qg3+ 22 Kh6!

Black resigned in view of 22…Qh2+ 23 Kg6! and the checks expire because of the correct position of the white king (on a rank adjacent to his black counterpart).

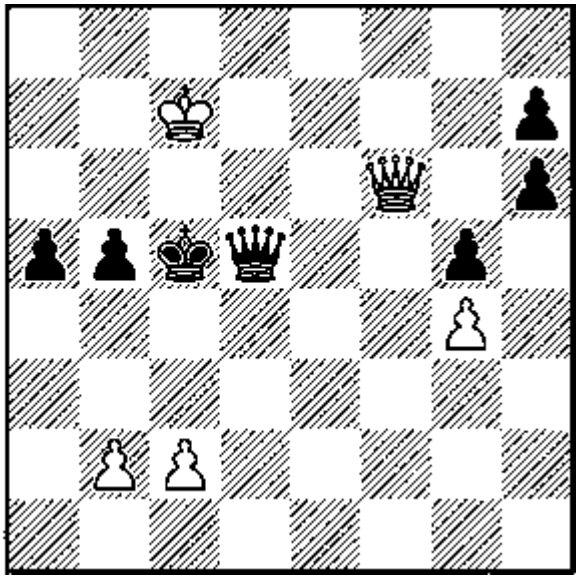
Winning Tactical Tricks

The queen is the strongest piece; therefore ***playing for mate*** occurs in queen endgames more often than in other kinds of endings. Among other techniques, ***winning the queen*** (usually by means of a skewer check) and ***exchange of queens*** should be mentioned.

These three tools can all be seen in the next example.

K. Eucken, 1947*

12-7



W?

1 c4!!

Every capture of the pawn leads to a mate in one. After 1…Qd3 White forces an exchange of the

queens by means of 2 Qc6+ Kd4 3 Qd5+ Ke3 4 Q×d3+ K×d3 5 cb; 1…Qe4 has the same consequences after 2 Qf5+! Q×f5 3 gf+–. Finally, every other retreat of the queen leads to its loss, for example:

(a) 1…Qa8 2 Qe5+ K×c4 3 Qc3+ Kd5 4 Qf3+;

(b) 1…Qh1 2 Qe5+ K×c4 3 Qc3+ Kd5 4 Qc6+;

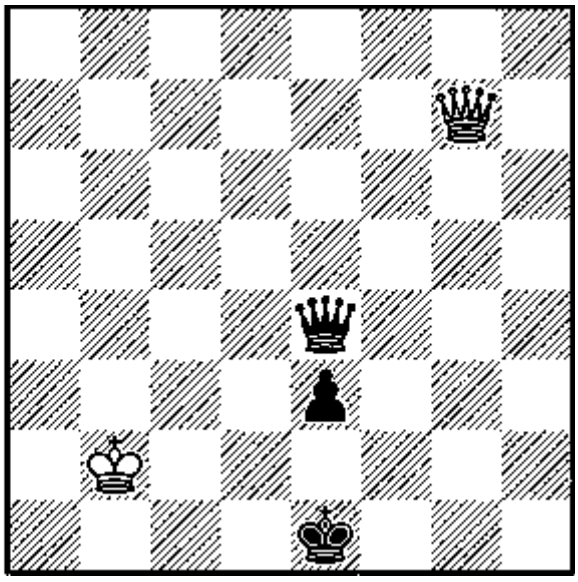
(c) 1…Qg8 2 Qe5+ K×c4 3 Qc3+ Kd5 4 Qb3+.

Tragicomedies

Batuev – Simagin

Riga 1954

12-8



B

As we know, defending against a central pawn is practically always a hopeless matter. The simplest winning process here is 1…Qb4+ 2 Kc2 Qc4+ 3 Kb2 Kd2 (king-to-king!). But miracles happen from time to time.

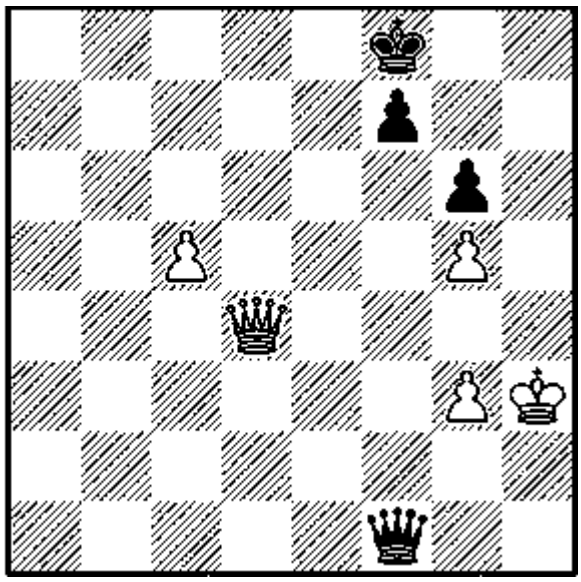
1…e2?? 2 Qg1+ Kd2 3 Qc1+ Kd3 4 Qc3#.

A year later, Simagin got a gift in return.

Borisenko – Simagin

USSR ch, Moscow 1955

12-9



W

Contrary to the previous example, the extra pawn cannot be exploited here. If 1 Kh4, 1…Qe2! is strong, while 1 Kh2 is met with 1…Qe2+ 2 Kg1 Qe1+ 3 Kg2 Qe2+ 4 Qf2 Qd3(c4)!=.

Winning chances can only be obtained by a king march to the passed pawn, so Borisenko pushed his king ahead.

1 Kg4??

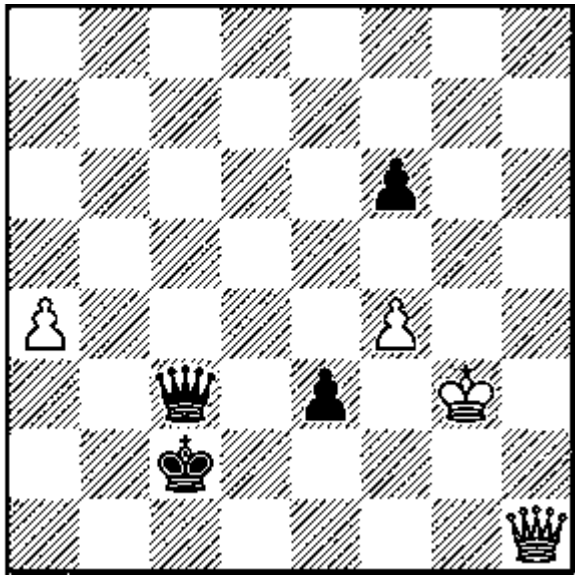
White had only expected 1…Qe2+ 2 Kf4 or 1…Qf5+ 2 Kh4, and 2…Qf3 fails to 3 Qd8+ Kg7 4 Qf6+!.

1…f5+!

White resigned because he cannot avoid mate: 2 Kh4 Qh1# or 2 gf Qf5+ 3 Kh4 Qh5#.

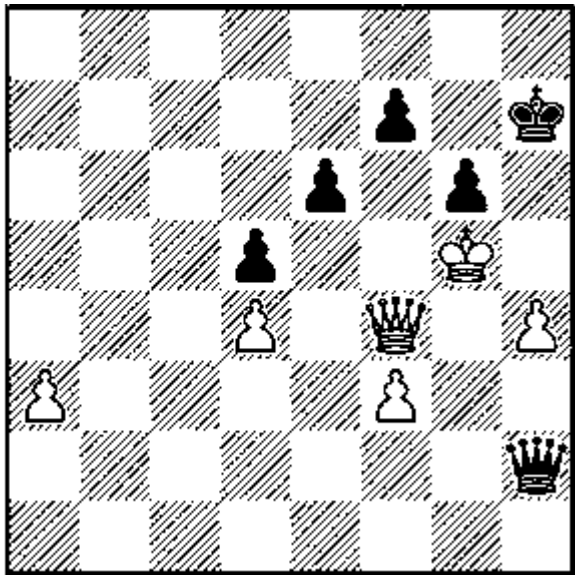
Exercises

12-10



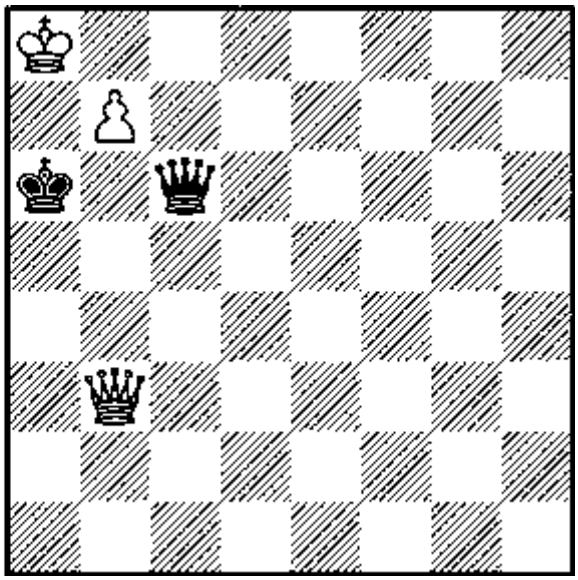
12/1
B?

12-11



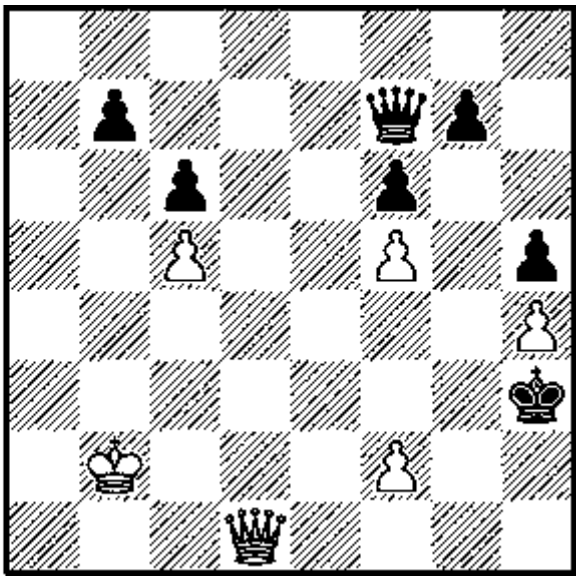
12/2
B?

12-12



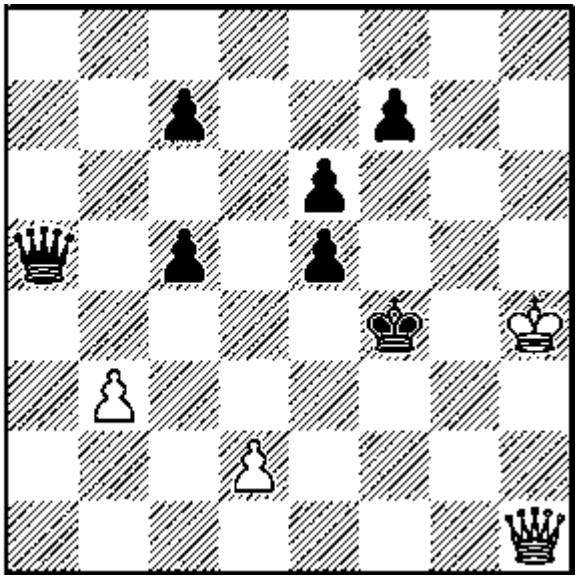
12/3
W?

12-13



12/4
W?

12-14



12/5
W?

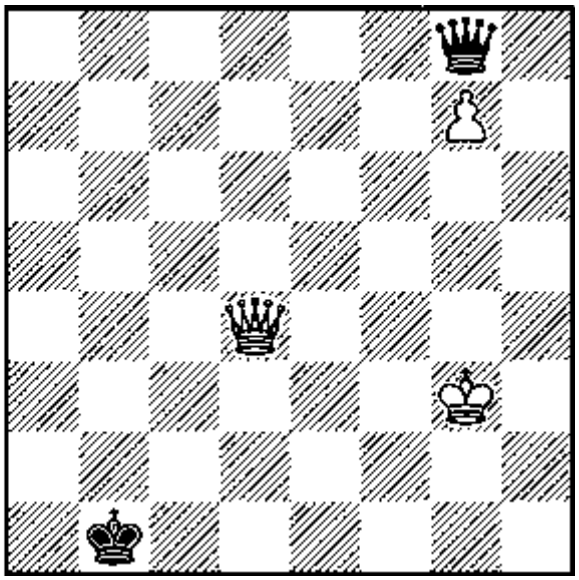
Defensive Tactics

The main tactical tools which can save a difficult queen-and-pawn endgame are ***stalemate*** and ***perpetual check***.

Y. Averbakh, 1962

12-15
$

W



A straightforward implementation of the king-to-king process does not bring any success here.

1 Kf2? Qf7+ 2 Ke1 Qe6+ 3 Kd1 Qb3+ 4 Kd2 Qa2+! 5 Ke3 (the checks seem to be exhausted) **5…Qb3+! 6 Qd3+? Ka1!**=

The queen cannot be captured because of stalemate, while a king's retreat loses the pawn: 7 Kd4 Qb4+! 8 Qc4 (8 Kd5 Qb7+; 8 Ke5 Qe7+) 8…Qd2+ 9 Kc5 Qg5+.

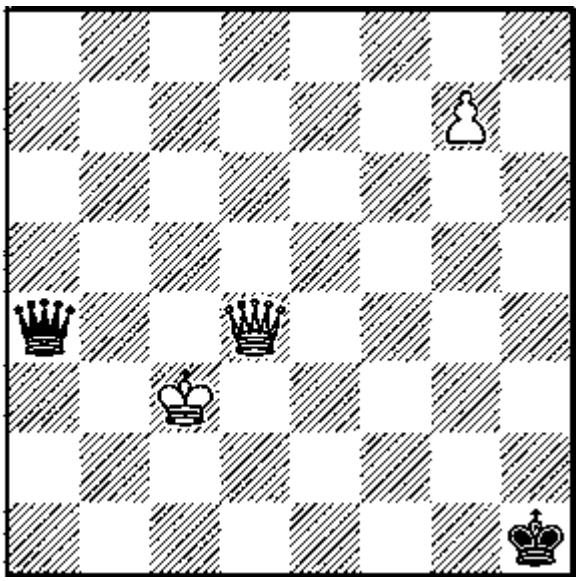
Both 1 Qe4+ and 1 Qg4 win, but the simplest winning procedure is moving the king downstairs to g1 (where the black queen cannot reach it) followed by a queen transfer to f8.

1 Qg1+! Ka2 2 Qg2+ Ka1 (2…Ka3 is the same) 3 Kh2! Qb8+ (3…Qh7+ 4 Kg1) 4 Kh1 Qg8 5 Kg1! Kb1 6 Qf1+ Kb2 7 Qf8+–.

J. Speelman

12-16

B



This is a standard configuration of a perpetual check, when the king cannot abandon its queen.

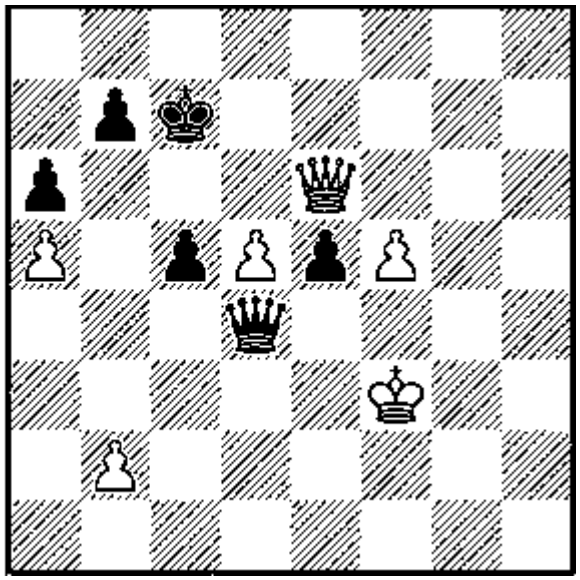
1…Qa1+! 2 Kd3 Qd1+ 3 Ke3 Qg1+! 4 Ke4 Qg4+ 5 Kd5 Qd7+ 6 Kc5 Qa7+ 7 Kc4 Qa4+ 8 Kc3 Qa1+, etc.

The following example demonstrates an interesting maneuver by the white king. After the threat of perpetual check had been eliminated, White exploited his advantage in an instructive way.

Tukmakov – Agzamov
Erevan zt 1982

12-17

W?



1 Kg3!

The premature advance 1 f6? leads to a draw: 1…Qf4+ 2 Kg2 Qg5+ 3 Kh3 Qh5+. Therefore Tukmakov brings his king to h3 first, and only then does he intend to push the f-pawn. For example, 1…c4!? 2 Kh3! (2 f6? is still wrong; 2 Qb6+? also does not win in view of 2…Q×b6 3 ab+ Kd7! 4 f6 a5 5 Kg4 e4!=) 2…Q×b2 3 f6!±.

1…Qf4+ 2 Kh3 c4

While the white queen protects the h6-square, Black has no perpetual check.

3 Qe7+ Kc8

3…Kb8 4 Qf8+ Ka7 was more tenacious, although after 5 d6! e4 6 d7 or 5…Qg5 6 Qf7, Black's situation still would have been difficult.

4 Qf8+ Kd7 5 f6+– Qf3+ 6 Kh4 Qf4+ 7 Kh5 Qf3+ 8 Kg6 Qe4+ 9 Kg7 Qg2+ 10 Kh7 Qe4+ 11 Kg8

The king, as usual, has found an exile from the checks on an adjacent rank to his adversary.

11…Q×d5+ 12 f7 Kc6

12…Qe6 13 Qg7 e4 14 Kh8+–.

13 Qc8+ Kb5 14 Kg7 Qg2+ 15 Kf6 Qf3+ 16 Ke7 Black resigned.

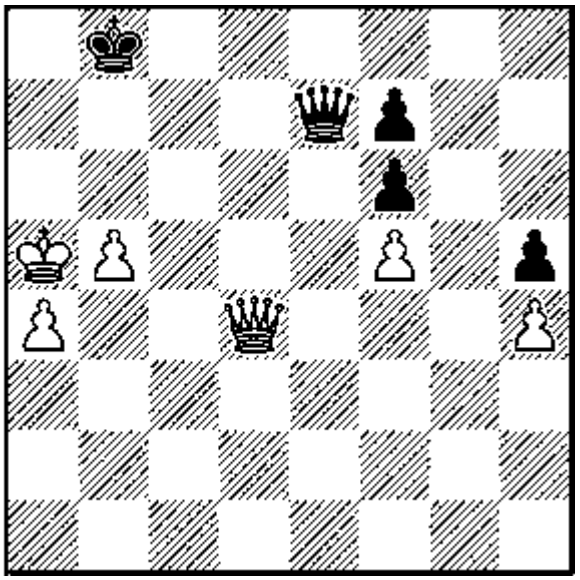
Tragicomedies

Chigorin – Schlechter

Ostende 1905

12-18

B



1…Qc7+!

The last trap in this totally hopeless position.

2 Qb6+??

After 2 b6 or 2 Kb4, Black would have had only one option – to capitulate.

2…Ka8!

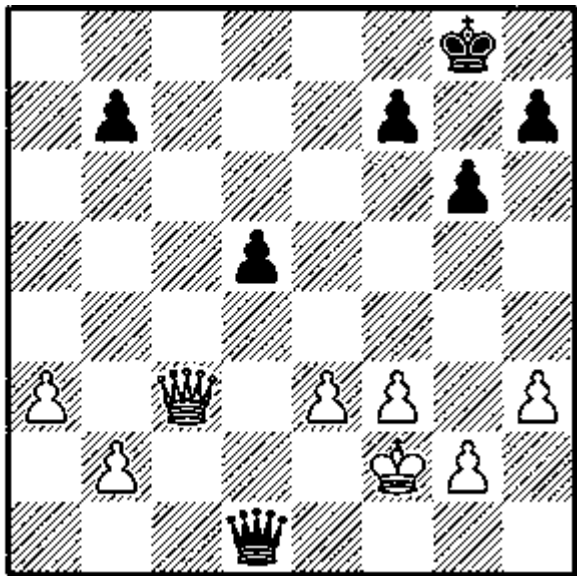
Draw. If White takes the queen Black is stalemated, otherwise a sort of perpetual check happens: 3 Ka6 Qc8+ 4 Ka5 Qc7!.

Alekhine – Maróczy

New York 1924

12-19

W



White's extra pawn must bring him a relatively easy win. Alekhine recommends 1 Qd4! Qc2+ 2 Kg3 (△ 3 Q×d5 Q×b2 4 Qd8+ Kg7 5 Qd4+) 2…Qc6 3 a4. 1 Kg3!, planning 2 Kh2, was also strong.

However, White greedily went after the b7-pawn.

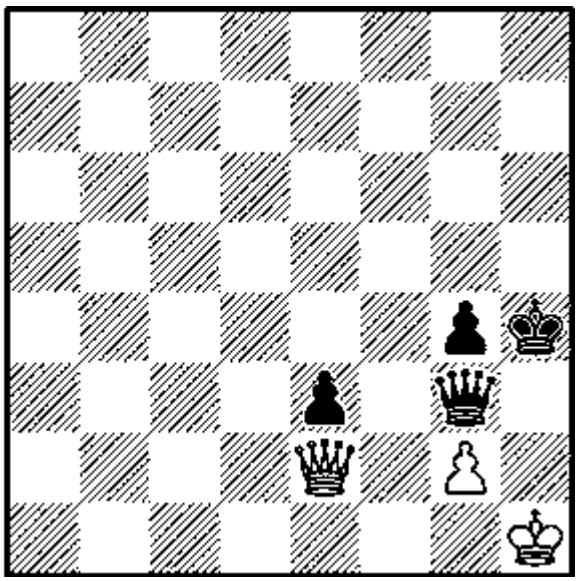
1 Qc8+?! Kg7 2 Q×b7?? (it was not too late to retreat: 2 Qc3+) **2…Qd2+ 3 Kg3 d4! 4 ed Qg5+**

Draw. The king cannot escape the checks.

Exercises

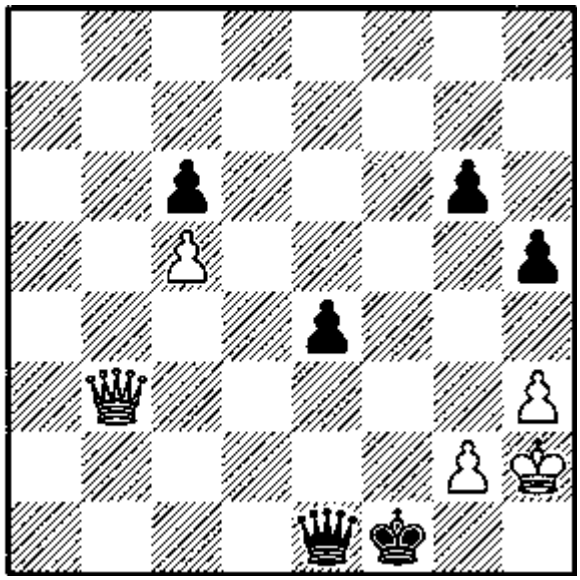
12-20

12/6
W?



12-21

12/7
B?



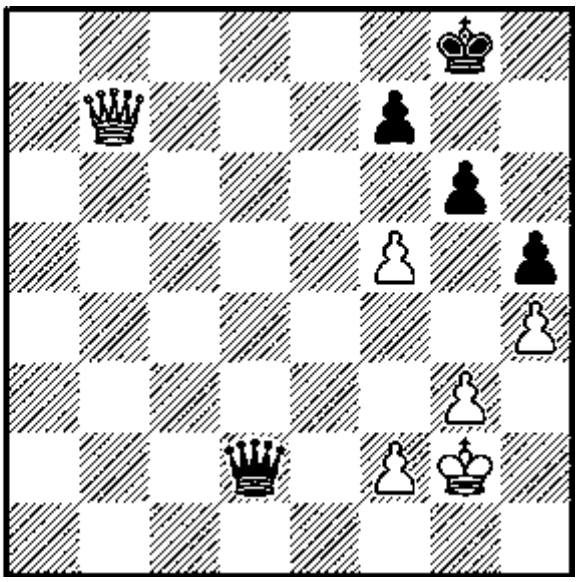
Pawns on the Same Wing

With a normal pawn structure, endgames of “one pawn versus two,” “two pawns versus three,” and “three pawns versus four” on the same wing are drawn.

Larsen – Keres
San Antonio 1972

12-22

W



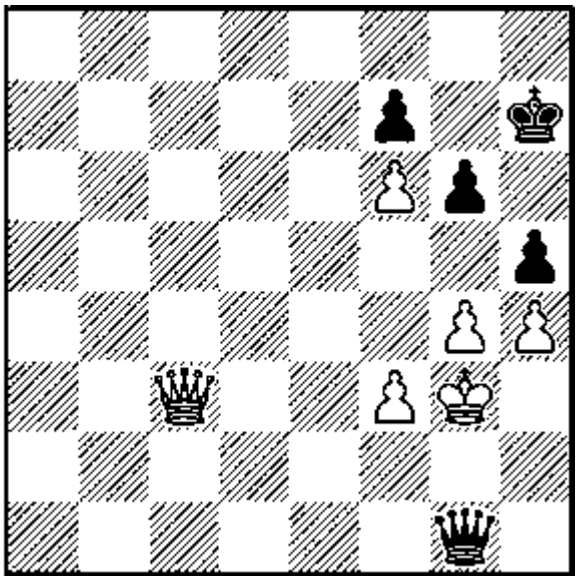
1 f6

An alternative was 1 fg fg 2 Qe4±. The basic defensive principle is simple: Black should prevent an invasion by the white king.

The move actually played also does not promise any winning chances. Even with the f5-pawn moved to the e-file, there would have been no win.

1…Qd8 2 Qc6 Kh7 3 Qc3 Qd5+ 4 f3 Qa2+ 5 Kh3 Qb1 6 Kg2 Qa2+ 7 Kf1 Qa6+ 8 Ke1 Qe6+ 9 Kf2 Qa2+ 10 Kg1 Qb1+ 11 Kg2 Qa2+ 12 Kh3 Qb1 13 g4 Qh1+ 14 Kg3 Qg1+

12-23



W

15 Kf4??

White should have accepted a drawn outcome: 15 Kh3. The attempt to play for a win turns out to be playing for a loss.

15…Qh2+ 16 Kg5?!

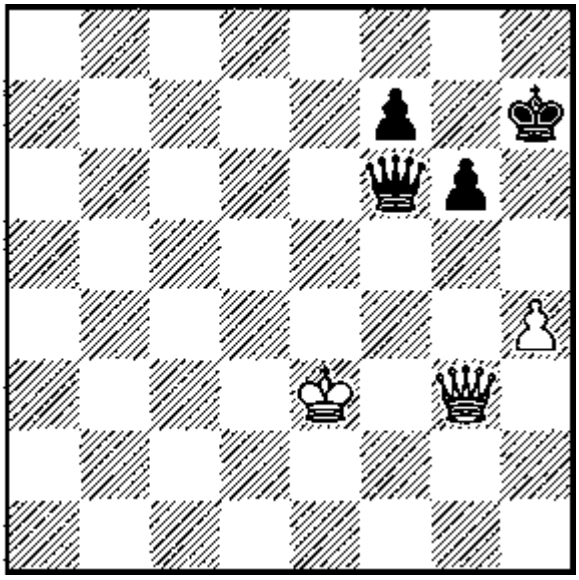
After 16 Ke4 Q×h4 White's position is difficult but it is better than the game continuation.

16…Qg3!

There is no satisfactory defense from 17…hg.

17 Qe3 hg 18 Qf4 Q×f3 19 Q×g4 Qe3+ 20 Qf4 Qe2 21 Qg3 Qb5+ 22 Kf4 Qf5+ 23 Ke3 Q×f6–+

12-24



W

In this case, two pawns win against one. Firstly, because one of them is passed; secondly, because the white king is cut off from the kingside and the h4-pawn is therefore vulnerable.

24 Qg5 Qf1 25 Qg4 (25 Qd8 Kg7 △ Qf6) **25…Qe1+** (the king is driven away even more) **26 Kd3 Qe6 27 Qf4 Kg7 28 Qd4+ f6 29 Qb4** (29 Qf4 Qe5 30 Qg4 Kh6) **29…Qf5+ 30 Ke2**

If 30 Ke3, Black wins by means of 30…Kh6 31 Qf8+ Kh5 32 Qh8+ Kg4 33 Qh6 Qf3+!, forcing a queen exchange.

30…Kh6 31 Ke1

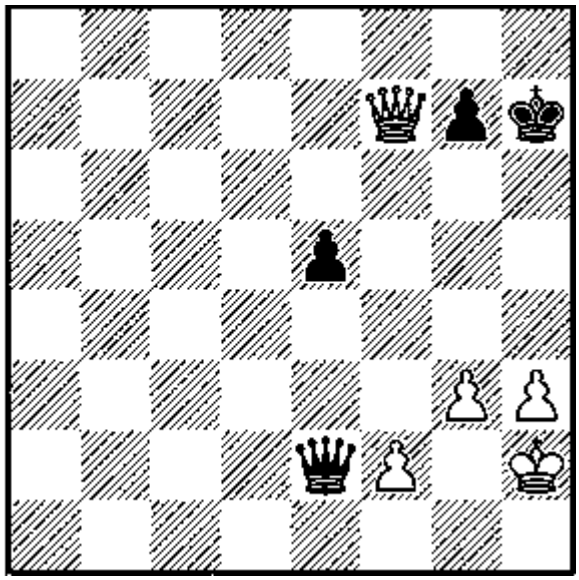
After 31 Qf8+ Kh5 32 Qh8+ Kg4 33 Qh6, the check from f3 is weaker because of 34 Ke1, but Black has 33…Qh5!, and every queen retreat will be met with …K×h4 resulting in a discovered check. Quicker success can be achieved by means of 33…Qc2+! and 34…Kf3 – a mating attack.

31…Kh5 32 Qc4 Qg4 33 Qc5+ K×h4 34 Qe7 Qf5 35 Qb4+ Kh5 36 Qc4 g5 37 Qf7+ Kh4 38 Qf8 Kg3 39 Qa3+ Qf3 40 Qd6+ Kg2 41 Qd2+ Kh3 42 Qd7+ f5 43 Qg7 g4 44 Qh8+ Kg3 45 Qe5+ f4 46 Qb8 Qe3+ 47 Kd1 Kg2 White resigned.

Averbakh – Suetin
USSR ch, Kiev 1954

12-25

W?



White's plan is a king attack and it must be successful because Black's pawn structure is destroyed.

1 g4! Qd2

1…e4 2 Kg3 e3? fails to 3 Qh5+ Kg8 4 Qe8+ Kh7 5 Q×e3.

2 Kg3 Qc3+ 3 Kh4 Qd4 4 Qf5+ g6

Or 4…Kg8 5 Kh5! and g4-g5-g6.

5 Qf7+ Kh6 6 Qf6 Kh7 7 Kg5 Qd2+ 8 f4! ef 9 Qf7+ Kh8 10 Kh6 Black resigned.

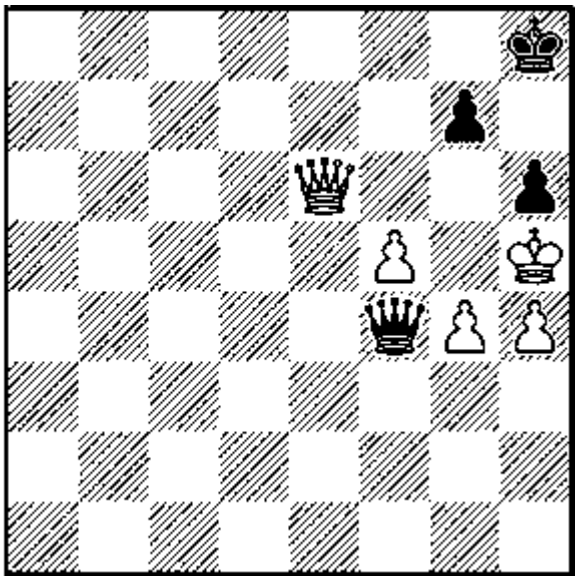
Please pay attention to the fact that White exploits Black's pawns as ***an umbrella*** giving protection from queen checks. We learned this technique when studying rook-and-pawn endings; it is no less important for queen endgames too.

Tragicomedies

Shcherbakov – Arlazarov
USSR 1972

12-26

W?



1 f6!

The game Mackenzie-Sergeant (Edinburgh 1920), where the same position occurred, continued 1 Kg6? Q×g4+ 2 Kf7 Qh5+?? (2…Kh7!=) 3 Kf8, and Black resigned because of an inevitable mate.

1…Kh7!? (1…gf 2 Kg6) **2 fg??**

White overlooks a queen sacrifice that forces a stalemate. Both 2 Qf5+! Q×f5+ 3 gf gf 4 Kg4 Kg7 5 Kf4 Kf7 6 Ke4 Ke7 7 Kd5 Kd7 8 h5⊙ and a more spectacular 2 f7! Qe5+! 3 g5! (3 Q×e5?? g6#) 3…Q×e6 4 f8N+! were winning.

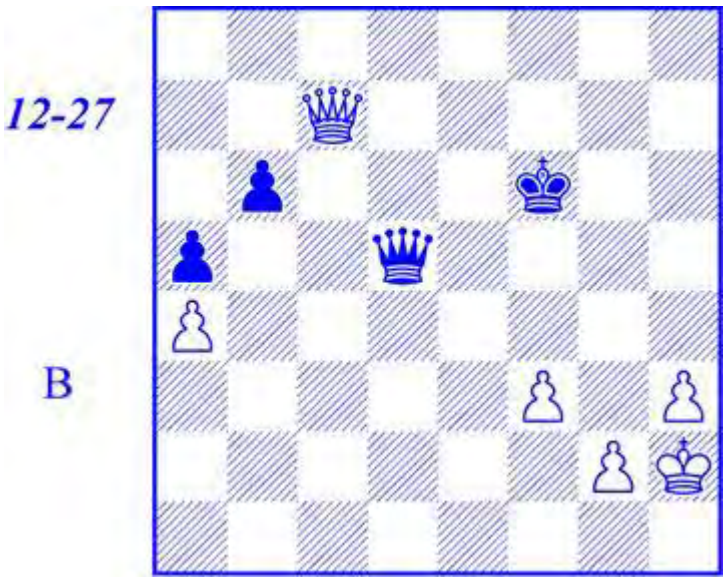
2…Qf7+! Draw.

A Passed Pawn

A passed pawn supported by a queen is a powerful instrument. To stop it, the combined efforts of a king and a queen are required; a queen alone cannot manage it.

When the passed pawn is well advanced, it can outweigh an opponent's huge material advantage on another wing.

Averbakh – Zurakhov
Minsk 1952



1…b5! 2 ab (2 Q×a5? Qe5+) **2…Q×b5**

2…Qe5+? 3 Q×e5+ K×e5 fails because of 4 h4! a4 5 h5 a3 6 h6 Kf6 7 b6+–.

3 Qd6+ Kf7 (3…Kg7!?) **4 h4**

If the a-pawn were a bit more advanced, the peaceful outcome would not be in doubt: White would have to submit to perpetual check. But, under current conditions, he still has winning chances.

The point is that if the black king stands in the way of the white pawns, their advance (and, eventually, a king intervention) can create mating threats. On the other hand, if Black holds his king aside, then the h-pawn balances Black's passed pawn, while their exchange still leaves White his two extra pawns.

Only a detailed analysis can tell us who comes first in implementing his plans. In Averbakh's opinion, only 4…Qb4! 5 Qd5+ Kg7 6 Qe5+ Kh7 7 f4 a4 8 h5 a3 9 Qf5+ Kg7 10 Qg6+ Kh8 11 Qf6+ Kg8! was good enough for a draw, while the naturallooking move from the game was erroneous.

4…a4? 5 Qf4+ Ke6

According to Averbakh, 5…Kg6 also did not help.

6 Qg4+ Kd6?!

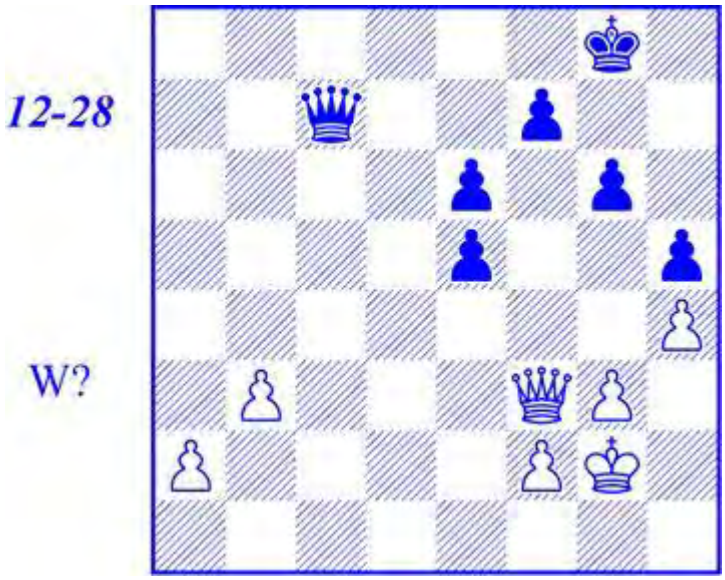
White's task was much more complicated after 6…Kf6 7 h5 Qe5+! 8 f4 Qf5, although he was still on the winning path.

7 Qg6+ Kc7 8 h5 Qe5+ 9 Kh3

Black resigned in view of 9…a3 10 h6 a2 11 Qg7+ Q×g7 12 hg a1Q 13 g8Q+–.

Euwe – Reshevsky

Nottingham 1936



In this sort of position, White's standard plan is to place his queen on a8 and then to push the a-pawn to the promotion square. The queen not only supports the pawn advance; it also protects the king from checks along the main diagonal. The only constructive idea for the weaker side is to achieve a perpetual check; to this end, he must destroy the position of the white king.

1 Qa8+!

1 b4? Qc4 2 a3 e4∞ is not good; 1 a4 Qa5 is also erroneous.

1…Kg7 2 a4 Qb6?

Alekhine indicated that 2…Qc3! was much more tenacious. 3 a5 could be met with 3…e4 4 Q×e4 Q×a5, eliminating White's most dangerous pawn. If 3 Qb7, then 3…e4 4 Q×e4 Q×b3 5 Qa8 e5, and the outcome is still unclear because White must always take …e5-e4 into account.

3 a5!+– Q×b3 4 a6 Qa3

After 4…Qa2 5 a7 e4 6 Qb7 e3 7 a8Q Q×f2+ 8 Kh3, Black has no perpetual check.

5 a7 e4 6 Qb8 Qf3+ 7 Kg1 Qd1+

7…e3 8 a8Q Q×f2+ 9 Kh1+–.

8 Kh2 Qe2 9 Qe5+

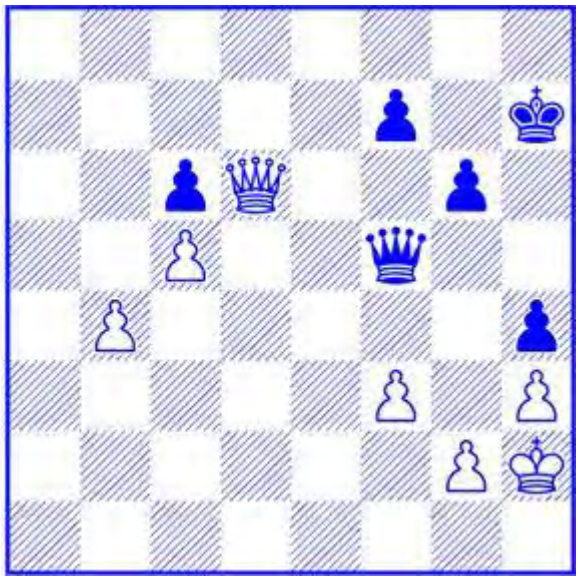
Black resigned (9…Kh7 10 Qf4).

The following endgame has been annotated superficially in endgame treatises, therefore the players' actions were not evaluated correctly.

Maróczy – Bogoljubow

Dresden 1936

12-29



W

1 b5! cb 2 c6

The same strategy that we have seen in the previous example, but there is a cardinal difference between these two endings: White's queen will be obliged to abandon the h2-b8 diagonal in order to take control over the promotion square, giving Black opportunities for checks. The question is whether these will be perpetual check.

2…Qc2?!

As will be seen, it would have been good for Black to get rid of his b-pawn: 2…b4! 3 Q×b4 Qe5+ 4 f4 Qc7. I am not sure that this position can be won.

3 Qd5?

"3 c7 at once was simpler," comments Averbakh. No, it was not, in view of the reply 3…Qc3! (we shall study its consequences later). The precise order of moves is 3 Qd7! (the f7-pawn is attacked) 3…Qc4 4 c7, coming directly to a position that will occur later on in the game.

3…Kh6

Black does not allow a capture on f7 with check. 3…Kg7?, with the same purpose, is weaker in view of 4 Qd4+!.

4 Qd6!?

Maróczy, this recognized expert in queen endings, leaves the b5-pawn alive, hoping that it will eventually serve as an "umbrella" for his king.

4…Qc4?

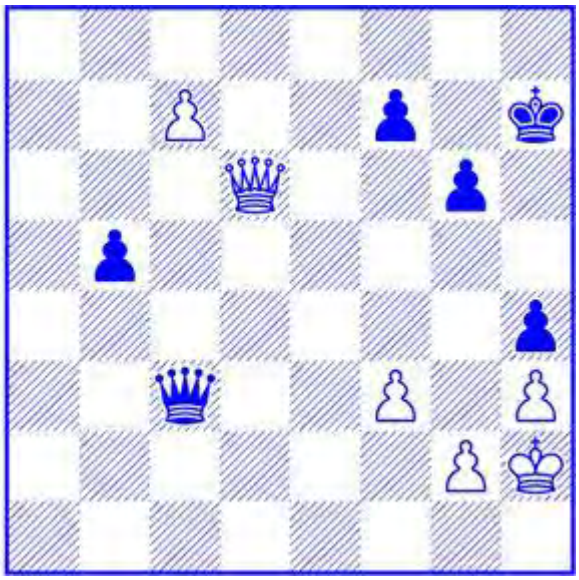
4…Kh7? 5 Qd7! Qc4 6 c7 led to a transposition of moves; if 4…Kg7? then the same check 5 Qd4+! is again very strong. Finally, 4…b4? is quite bad because of 5 c7, with the threats 6 Qf8+ and 6 Qd7.

The best defense is 4…Qc3!. The queen must seek to check from e5 rather than f4. White has a choice: 5 Qf8+ or 5 c7.

(a) 5 Qf8+ Kh5 6 Q×f7 Q×c6 7 f4 Kh6 8 Qe7 Qc4 9 Q×h4+ Kg7 10 Qe7+ Kg8. This position is similar to that from the Averbakh-Zurakhov game but the g6-pawn is present here; it gives the king protection, and therefore a draw is evident.

(b) 5 c7 Kh7 (5…Kg7!?). We have reached the position that could have arisen after 3 c7?!.

12-30



W

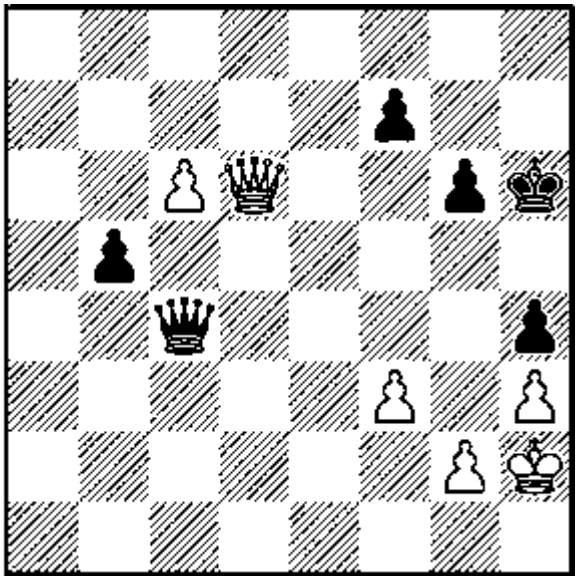
Let us check the most committal line: 6 Qd7 Qe5+ 7 f4 (otherwise White cannot escape from checks) 7…Q×f4+ 8 Kg1. The absence of the f3-pawn allows Black to achieve a perpetual check: 8…Qe3+ 9 Kf1 Qf4+ 10 Ke2 Qe4+ 11 Kd2 Qf4+! (11…Q×g2+? 12 Kc3 b4+ 13 Kb3!, and the checks will expire soon) 12 Kd3 Qf1+ 13 Ke4 (13 Kd4?? Qd1+; 13 Kc3 Qc4+) 13…Q×g2+ 14 Ke5 Qb2+ 15 Kd5 (15 Qd4?! Qh2+! 16 Qf4 f6+ 17 Ke4, and now, say, 17…Qg2+ 18 Kd4 Qc6) 15…Qa2+! 16 Kc5 (16 Kc6 Qa6+) 16…Qa7+! 17 Kd6 Qa3+! and the king cannot escape from the pursuit.

Notice Black's defensive method, particularly the last moves of this line. ***In queen-and-pawn endgames, diagonal checks are often the most effective***.

What else can White do? One can easily see that 6 Qd8 is not an improvement on White's play: the black queen gets the e6-square for checks. He can try 6 Qe7 Kg7□ 7 f4 Qc4 (7…Qg3+?? 8 Kg1+–) 8 Qe5+ Kh7 9 f5, but after 9…g5 or 9…b4 8 fg+ K×g6, White is faced with the same problems. No win can be seen! (analysis by Dvoretsky)

Now let us see the remainder of the game:

12-31



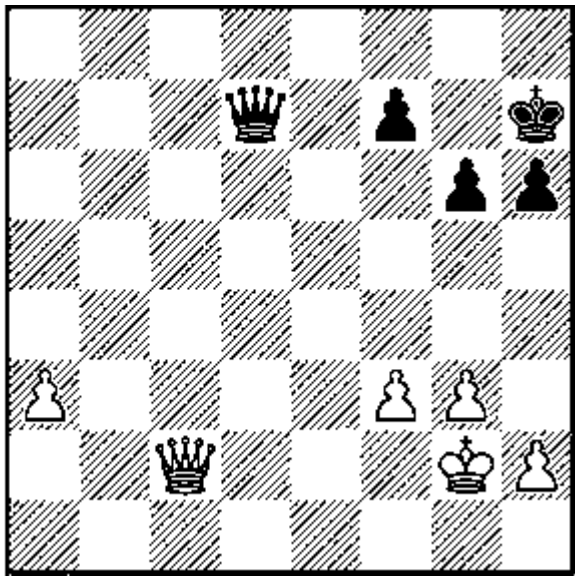
W

5 c7 Kh7 6 Qd7! Qf4+ 7 Kg1 Qc1+ 8 Kf2 Qc5+ 9 Ke2 Qc2+ 10 Ke3 Qc5+ 11 Ke4 Black resigned.

In case of 11…Qc2+ (with the idea of 12 Kd5 Qa2+), White proceeds with 12 Ke5 Qc3+ (12…Qb2+ 13 Qd4!) 13 Kd5 Qc4+ 14 Kd6 Qb4+ 15 Kc6 Qc3+ 16 Kb7. His plan to use the b5-pawn as an umbrella was successful.

Alekhine – Reshevsky
Amsterdam 1938

12-32



W

1 Qa2 Kg8 2 a4 Qc6 3 a5 Qa6

White could have had chances for success with his pawn on f2, although the winning process would have required much effort. In the actual position, his king is too exposed and a win is therefore beyond his reach.

4 g4 g5 5 Kf2 Qd6 6 Kf1 Qa6+ 7 Kg2 Kg7 8 Qb2+ Kg8 9 Qb8+ Kg7 10 Qe5+ Kg8 11 Kf2 Qa7+ 12 Ke2 Qa6+ 13 Kd2 Qc4!

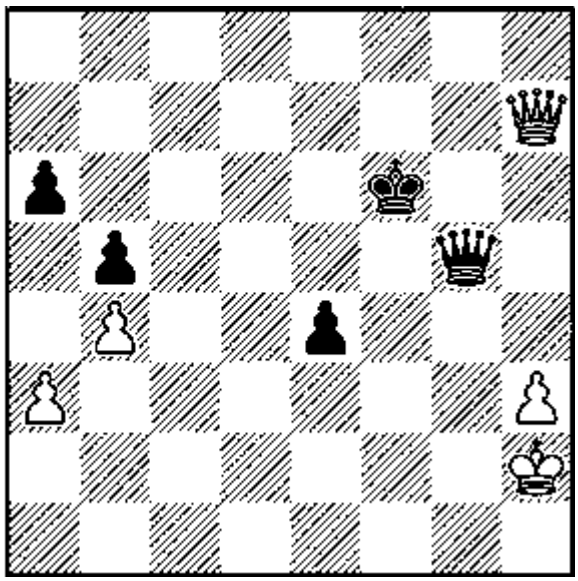
Reshevsky prevents the white king from drawing near the pawn.

14 Qf5 Qd4+ 15 Ke2 Qb2+ 16 Kd3 Qb3+ 17 Ke2 Qb2+ Draw.

Prandstetter – Gheorghiu

Warsaw zt 1979

12-33



B?

Black obviously stands better because his passed pawn is far more advanced than White's. But can he exploit this advantage? Black could achieve success by means of a king invasion to support his pawn, but this is not easy to do. Let us study a few of possible attempts.

1…e3?! is harmless in view of 2 Qe4!= or 2 Qc7!=.

The try to activate the king immediately by 1…Ke5?! is tempting. The variation 2 Qc7+ Kd4 3 Qc5+? Q×c5 4 bc leads to a pawn endgame which quickly converts to a queen ending won for Black: 4…K×c5! (4…e3? 5 Kg2=) 5 h4 (5 Kg2 Kd4 6 Kf2? Kd3 7 Ke1 a5–+) 5…Kd4! 6 h5 e3 (6…Ke5? 7 Kg3 a5 8 h6 Kf6 9 Kf4 b4 10 ab a4 11 b5=) 7 Kg2 (7 h6 e2 8 h7 e1Q 9 h8Q+ Qe5+) 7…Kd3 8 h6 e2 9 h7 e1Q 10 h8Q Qd2+ and 11…Kc2–+.

However, instead of the exchange of queens, 3 Qd6+! draws: 3…Kc4 4 Qe6+! Kd3 5 Qb3+. Even a move earlier 2 Qh8+ can be played: 2…Kd5 (on 2…Kf4 3 Qf8+ Ke3 4 Qc5+ the pawn

ending is drawn) 3 Qc3!, and the king cannot make any progress.

After 1…Qd2+! 2 Kg3 e3?, Black threatens a further pawn advance as well as 3…Ke5. However, White has 3 Qh4+! (control over the f2-square is vital) 3…Ke5 4 Kf3!=.

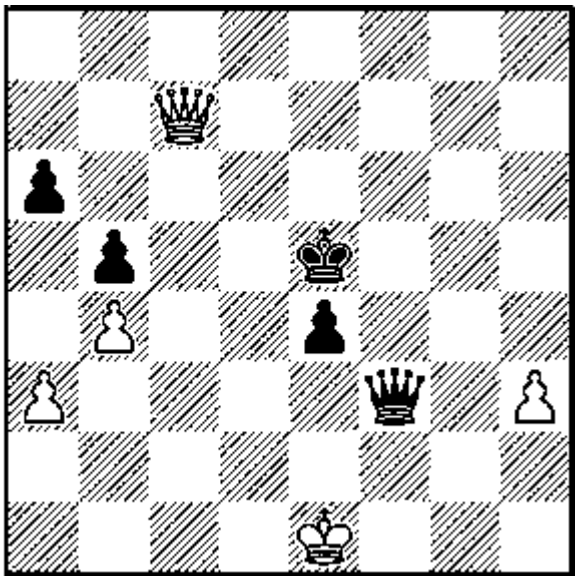
However, 2…Qe3+ (instead of 2…e3?) 3 Kg2 Qe2+! 4 Kg3 Ke5! puts White in an extremely difficult position. He can neither exchange queens on c5 nor impede the forward progress of the enemy king.

1…Qf4+ 2 Kg1 Qg3+ (there is evidently also no win after 2…Qc1+ 3 Kg2 Qd2+ 4 Kf1!) **3 Kf1 Qf3+ 4 Ke1=**

The white king has managed to stand in front of the black pawn, so it is a simple draw. What happens now resembles the Larsen-Keres ending: Black, in search of winning chances, forgets all caution and allows an exchange of queens when it is already winning for White.

4…Ke5 5 Qc7+

12-34



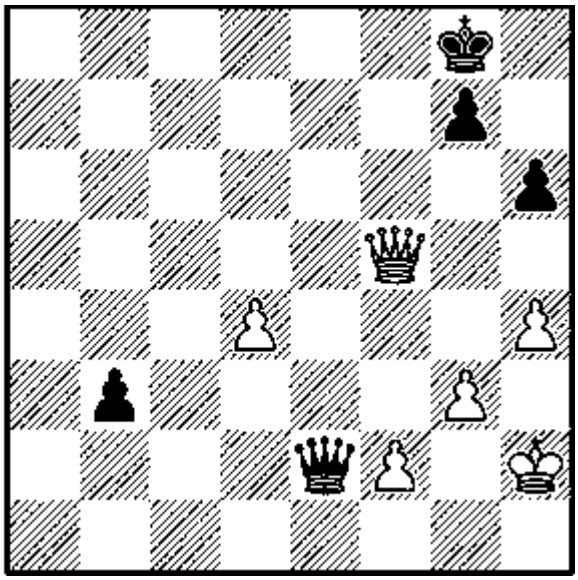
B

5…Kd4?? 6 Qc5+ Kd3 7 Qd5+ Kc3 8 Qd2+ Kb3 9 Qd1+! K×a3 10 Q×f3+ ef 11 h4 Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Karpov – Agdestein
Gjovik m (1) 1991

12-35



W

White should have accepted that there is no win, playing either 1 Qc8+ or 1 Qd5+ Kh8 2 Q×b3 Q×f2+ 3 Kh3 Q×d4.

1 d5??

Karpov expected only 1…b2? 2 d6 Qd1 (2…b1Q 3 Q×b1 Q×f2+ 4 Kh3) 3 d7 b1Q 4M Q×b1 Q×d7 and wished to torment his opponent some more in a drawn endgame, a delusion that was very unpleasant.

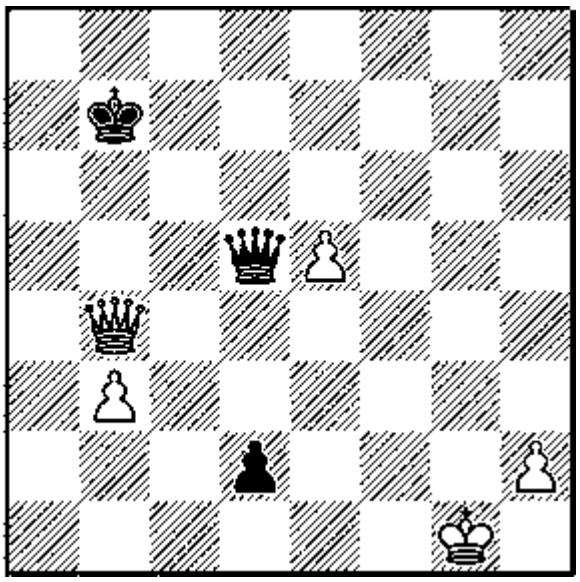
1…Qc2!–+

By taking control over the b1-h7 diagonal Black assures both the safety of his king and the promotion of his pawn.

2 Qf3 b2 3 d6 b1Q 4.d7 Qbd1 5 Qa8+ Kh7 White resigned.

Exercises

12-36



12/8
B?

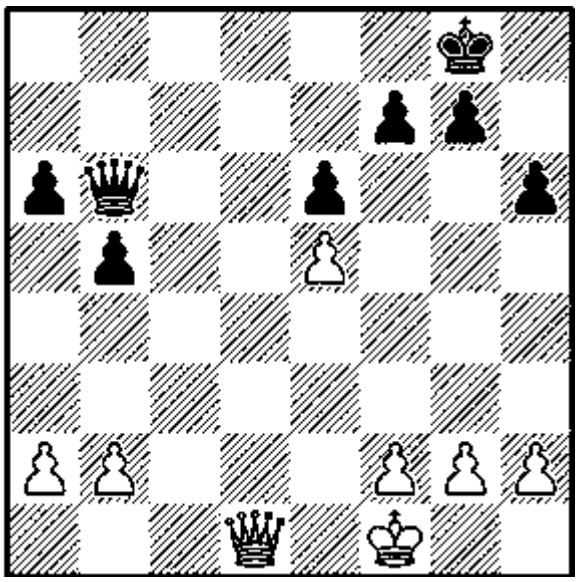
An Active Queen

The queen is a very mobile piece that can rapidly reach any part of the board. Therefore a more active position of the queen (compared with the opponent's queen) is usually only a temporary advantage which should be exploited immediately. But this advantage can be lasting, too: such is the case when the enemy's queen is chained to its own weak pawns.

This advantage is particularly tangible when the opponent's king is exposed. The stronger side's resources are dramatically rich in such cases: from a queen transfer (with checks) to a more favorable position or a double attack, to a queen exchange and even a mating attack.

Marshall – Maróczy
Ostende 1905

12-37



B

1…Qc5

The e5-pawn is White's main weakness. If it were standing on e3, the position would be even.

2 Qd8+ (2 f4? Qc4+) **2…Kh7 3 Qd3+ g6 4 Qc3 Qd5! 5 a3**

5 b3 is no better. Villeneuve gives the following line: 5…Qd1+ 6 Qe1 Qd3+ 7 Kg1 Qc2 8 Qa1 b4! 9 f4 (9 Kf1 g5) 9…Qc3 10 Qf1 Qd4+ 11 Kh1 Qb2–+.

5…Qd1+! 6 Qe1 Qd3+ 7 Kg1 Qc2 8 Qa1

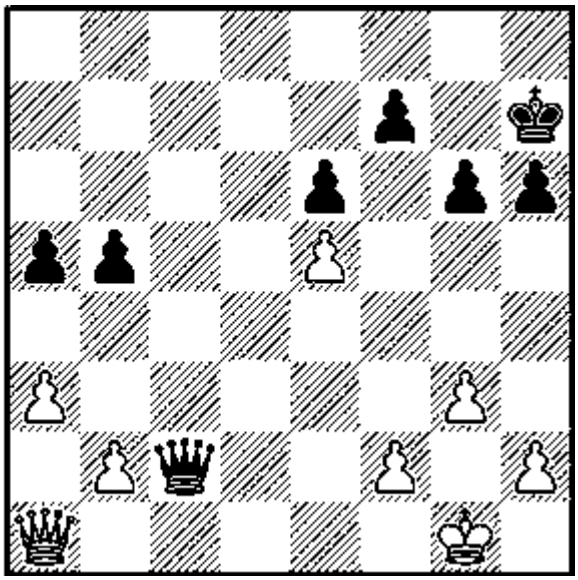
By means of threats to one pawn or another, and sometimes to the king, Black has precisely driven the white queen away to a corner. The pawn sacrifice 8 b4 Qb2 9 h4, suggested by Panchenko, brings White no relief: 9…Q×a3 (9…h5 10 Qe3 is weaker) 10 h5 (10 Qe4 Qc1+ 11 Kh2 Qc4–+) 10…Qd3 (after 10…gh 11 Qe4+ Kg7 12 Qf4 Qd3 13 Qf6+ Kg8 14 Q×h6 White obtains a counterplay) 11 hg+ K×g6–+.

8…a5! 9 g3

9 b4 ab 10 ab Qe4 is hopeless.

12-38

B



9…a4

Maróczy fixes the queenside pawns while the white queen still occupies a miserable position. 9…g5?! would have been less precise in view of 10 b4 ab 11 ab Qe4 12 Qc3 Kg6 13 h3 h5 14 Qc5 and almost all Black's advantage has melted away.

10 f4 Kg8!

Zugzwang! If 11 Kh1, then 11…Qf2 and …h6-h5-h4.

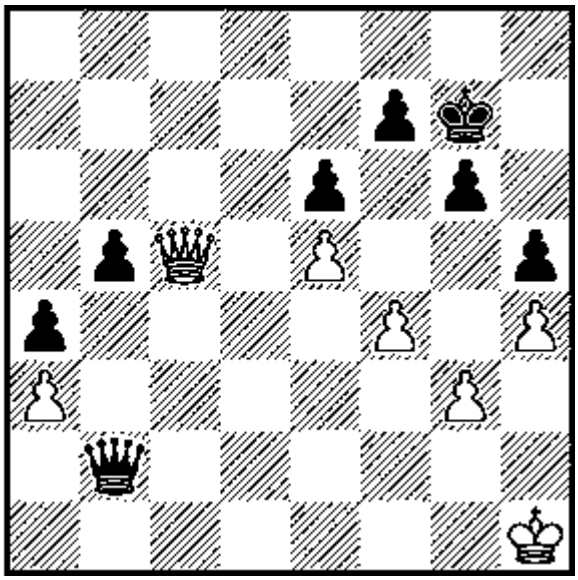
11 h3 h5 12 h4 Kg7 (zugzwang again) **13 Kh1**

13 Kf1 loses right away to 13…Qh2. If 13 Qa2, then 13…Qd1+ 14 Kf2 Kf8, and the white queen is arrested.

13…Qf2! 14 Qg1 Q×b2 15 Qc5

White lunges in a desperate counterattack but his hopes for perpetual check are not realized.

12-39



B

15…b4! 16 f5!?

After 16 Qe7 ba?! 17 Qf6+ Kg8 18 Qd8+ Kh7 19 Qe7 Qb1+ 20 Kh2 Qf5 21 Q×a3, White still could have had some hopes. However, Black plays 16…b3! 17 Qf6+ Kg8 18 Qd8+ Kh7 19 Qe7 Qb1+ 20 Kh2 Qf5 21 Qb7 Kg7 with an easy win.

16…ef 17 e6 ba 18 ef

18 e7 a2 19 e8N+ Kg8(h7) makes no sense.

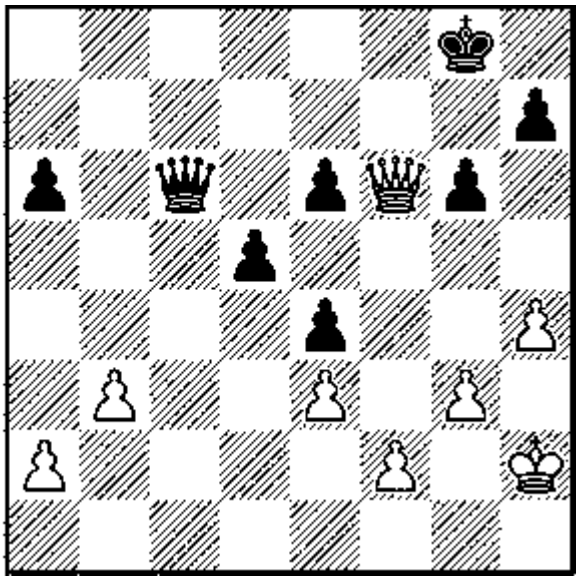
18…K×f7

The black king easily escapes from the checks in White's territory.

19 Qc7+ Ke6 20 Qc6+ Ke5 21 Q×a4 a2 22 Qe8+ Kd5 23 Qd7+ Ke4 24 Qc6+ Ke3 25 Qc5+ Qd4 26 Qa3+ Qd3 White resigned.

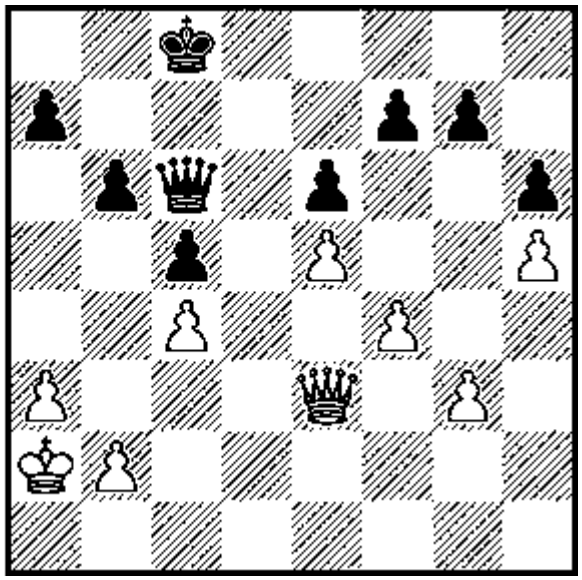
Exercises

12-40



12/9
W?

12-41



12/10
W?/Play

Chapter 13

Queen versus Rook

A Solitary Rook

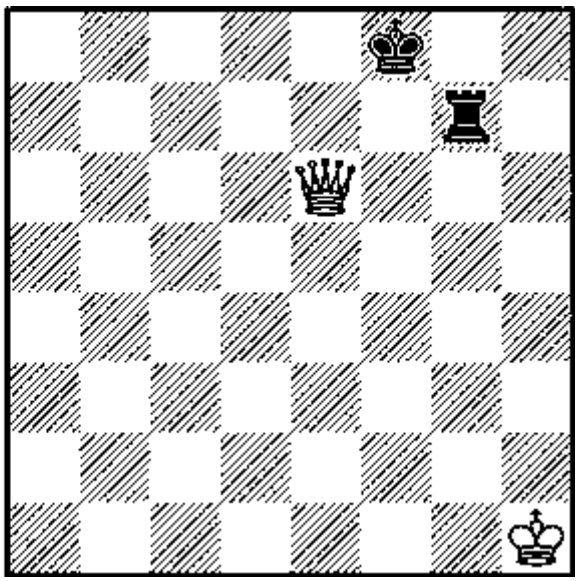
The side that has a rook will try, except in very rare cases, to build a fortress.

We shall study the most important theoretical positions here, both drawn and winning. Sometimes one must play dozens of precise moves in a row in order to destroy the opponent's line of defense. However, the winning plans that we should know are mostly standard, even when they are quite complicated tactically. Master Khenkin has greatly contributed to the theory of this sort of endgame; he wrote the corresponding section for Averbakh's endgame treatise and, for this purpose, analyzed a huge number of new positions.

A queen wins against a solitary rook. The cases when a king cannot escape from checks in view of a stalemate or a loss of a queen are exceptions.

D. Ponziani, 1782

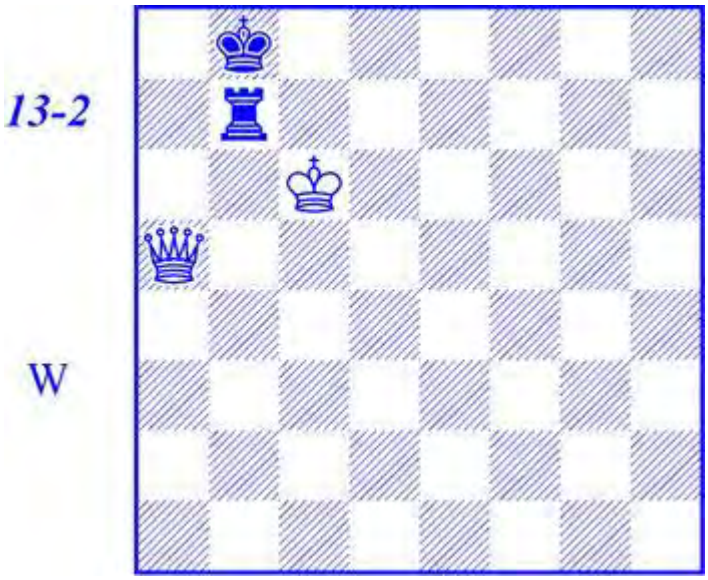
13-1
$
B



1…Rh7+ 2 Kg2 Rg7+ 3 Kf3 Rf7+ 4 Kg4 (4 Ke4 Re7) **4…Rg7+ 5 Kf5 Rf7+ 6 Kg6 Rg7+ 7 Kh6** (7 Kf6 Rg6+!) **7…Rh7+!**.

A standard winning method is shown in the following classical endgame.

Philidor, 1777



White's pieces are ideally placed. Now he should cede the necessity to move to his opponent by means of a triangular maneuver by the queen.

1 Qe5+ Ka7(a8) 2 Qa1+ Kb8 3 Qa5!

Zugzwang! The rook must abandon the black king. As a result, it inevitably becomes a victim of a double attack.

3…Rb1 (3…Rh7 4 Qe5+ Ka8 5 Qa1+ Kb8 6 Qb1+) **4 Qd8+ Ka7 5 Qd4+ Ka8 6 Qh8+ Ka7 7 Qh7+** and 8 Q×b1.

The methods in this elementary example (***zugzwang, triangulation as a tool for passing the obligation to move, and double attack***) are standard for almost all queen-versus-rook endings, with or without pawns.

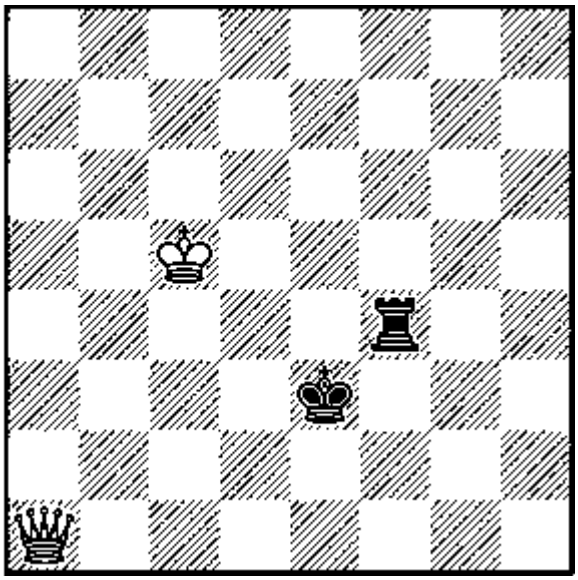
If the defender's king is standing in the center, the stronger side gradually drives him to the edge of the board to create mating threats. However this mission is not elementary, since the rook may sometimes be placed far away from the king without fear of being lost immediately.

Under time controls that are characteristic for modern chess, queen-versus-rook endings usually occur when the both sides are suffering from time shortage. For example, grandmaster Svidler, playing against Gelfand at the 2001 world championship in Moscow, had a few minutes (plus an additional 10 seconds after every move) and failed to outplay his opponent over 50 moves; thereafter the arbiters duly declared a draw.

In order to avoid such an unpleasant occurrence, one can practice with a computer program; it defends against the queen in a most tenacious way.

The study of the following position is based upon computer-generated lines that indicate the best moves for both sides (of course, these are not the only moves one can play). Naturally, there is no sense in remembering these lines by heart; typical ideas behind the moves are much more important.

13-3



B

1…Rf8!? 2 Qd4+ Ke2 3 Qg4+ Ke3 4 Qe6+ Kf3 5 Kd4 Rd8+ 6 Kc3 Rf8 7 Qc6+

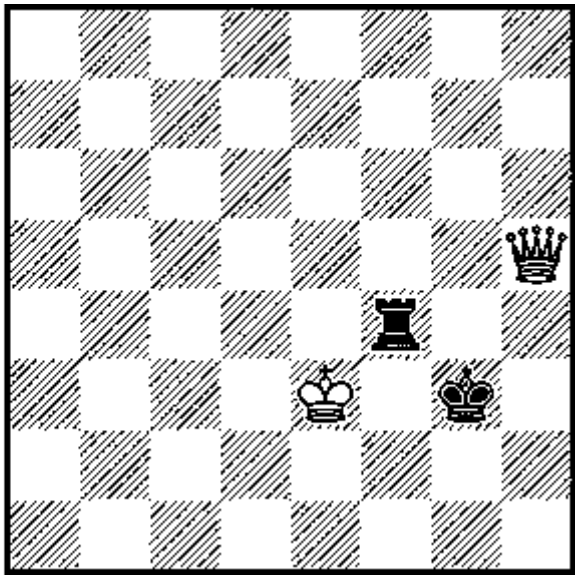
If White had played this two moves earlier, Black could have replied with 5…Ke3. Now, 7…Ke3? is impossible in view of the double attack 8 Qc5+.

7…Kg4 8 Qg6+ Kf3 9 Qh5+!

An excellent square for the queen. Black's king is forced to the g-file. After 9…Ke3?, 9…Kf4? or 9…Kf2? the rook is lost immediately. 9…Ke4? is also bad in view of 10 Qe2+ Kd5 11 Qc4+. In addition, the queen takes control over the important squares e8 and f3, thereby helping the king to come closer to its counterpart.

9…Kg3 10 Kd3 Rf3+ (10…Rd8+ 11 Ke3 Re8+? is impossible) **11 Ke4 Rf4+ 12 Ke3** (and 12…Rf3+? is also impossible.)

13-4



B

12…Rg4

Another possibility is 12…Ra4. White cannot win the rook by force. He must drive the black king away to an edge, place his queen optimally and then move his king closer to its counterpart. The main line is 13 Qe5+ Kh3 14 Qe6+ Kh4 15 Qe7+ Kg3 16 Qd6+! Kh4 17 Kf3! (from d6 the queen prevents a rook check from a3) 17…Kh5 (the rook is finally unable to escape now from a double attack) 18 Qd5+ Kh4 19 Qd8+ Kh5 20 Qe8+.

13 Qe5+ Kg2 14 Ke2⊙ Rg3 15 Qh5! Kg1 16 Qd5⊙

Quiet moves that limit the mobility of enemy pieces or create a zugzwang situation are often much more effective than checks.

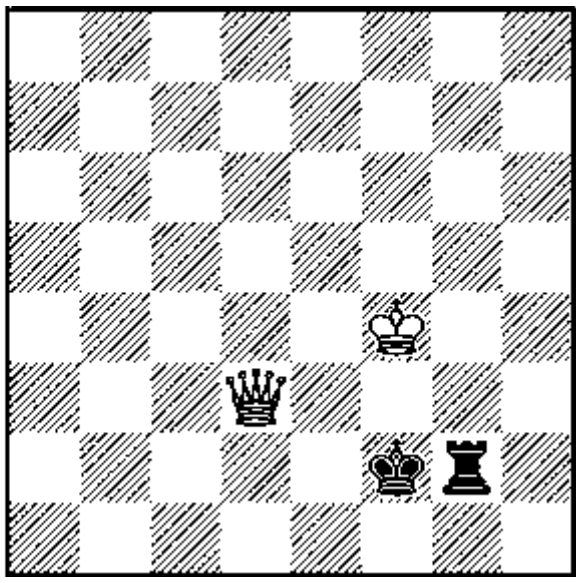
16…Rg6

In case of 16…Rg2+ 17 Kf3 Kh2 18 Qh5+ Kg1 19 Qh4⊙, we come to the Philidor position that is already familiar to us. The main line brings us the same result.

17 Qd4+ Kh2 18 Qf4+ Kg1 19 Kf3 Rg2 20 Qh4⊙+–

Now we return to an earlier moment and study 4…Kf2 (instead of 4…Kf3) 5 Kd4 Rf4+. With Black's king on f3, White could have played 6 Kd3, while now this is weaker in view of 6…Rf3+ 7 Kd2 Kg3. The computer suggests 6 Ke5! Rf3 7 Qa2+ Ke3 8 Qc2 (zugzwang) 8…Rg3 9 Qc3+ Kf2 10 Qd2+ Kf3 11 Kf5 (the same zugzwang again, but this time closer to the edge) 11…Rg2 12 Qd3+ Kf2 13 Kf4.

13-5



B

If Black plays 13…Kg1 now, then 14 Qd4+ Kh2 15 Kf3 Rg3+ 16 Kf2 Rg2+ 17 Kf1+–. Examine the final position closely: the rook cannot proceed with checks because the queen controls the g1-square. ***This is the method the stronger side uses for approaching with the king: first the queen takes control of one of the adjacent squares***.

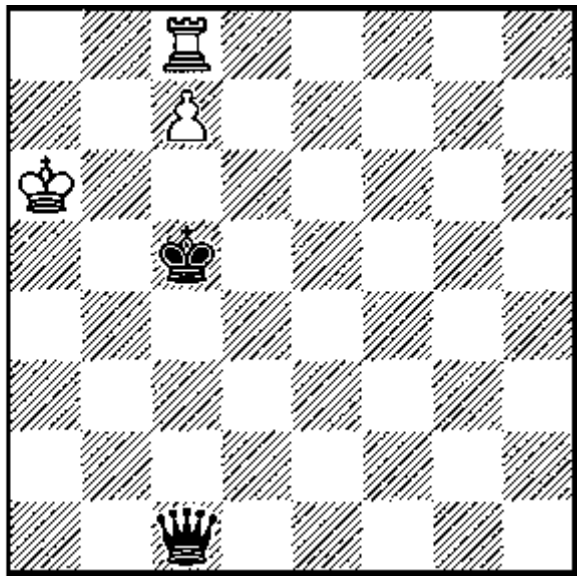
13…Ke1 14 Qc4 Kf2 15 Qc6!

The natural looking 15 Qe4 leads to a reciprocal zugzwang position after 15…Kf1 16 Kf3 Rf2+ 17 Kg3 Rd2!; this position should be reached with the adversary on move. If 15…Kf1 now, 16 Kf3 Rf2+ 17 Kg3 Rd2 18 Qe4!⊙+– is decisive.

15…Rh2 16 Qf3+ Kg1 17 Qd5! (but, of course, not 17 Kg3?? Rh3+!) 17…Kf2 18 Qd4+ Kg2 19 Kg4⊙ Kf1 20 Kg3 Rg2+ 21 Kf3+– (the queen guards the f2-square).

Exercises

13-6



13/1
W?

Queen vs. Rook and Pawn

The Rook behind the Pawn

The farther the pawn is advanced, the greater are the chances for a draw. For instance, Black wins in all cases when his king blocks a white pawn that has not crossed the middle line. Almost all positions with the pawn on the fifth rank are won. However if the pawn has reached sixth or seventh rank, a draw is quite probable.

N. Grigoriev, 1933

13-7
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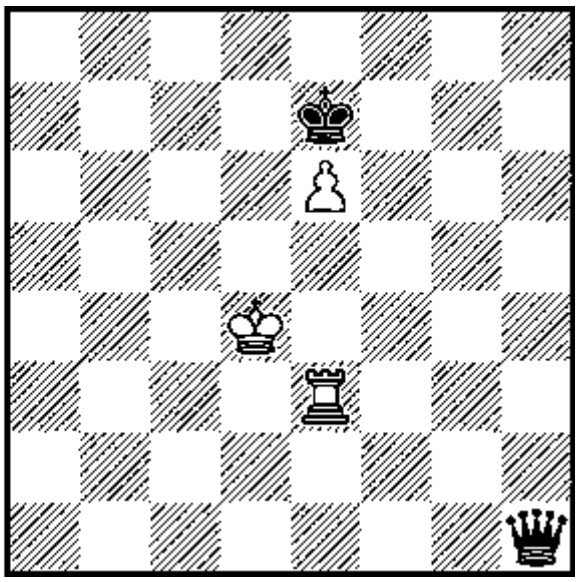


It is good for White to keep his king on the lower ranks. He would have had no problems if his king were standing on e2; then Black could not create zugzwang.

With White on move, a draw can be achieved by means of **1 Kd3! Qd1+ 2 Kc3!⊙.**

An important position of reciprocal zugzwang. After 2…Kf8 (2…Qd5 3 Kc2 is useless) 3 e7+ Ke8 4 Re4 Qf3+ 5 Kd4 Qb3 6 Re3 Qc2 7 Re4, White is out of danger.

However with Black on move, the evaluation differs. He manages to press White's pieces, by means of zugzwang, closer to the pawn, which means closer to the black king. The king then joins the queen at an appropriate moment with decisive effect.

1…Qb1! 2 Kc3

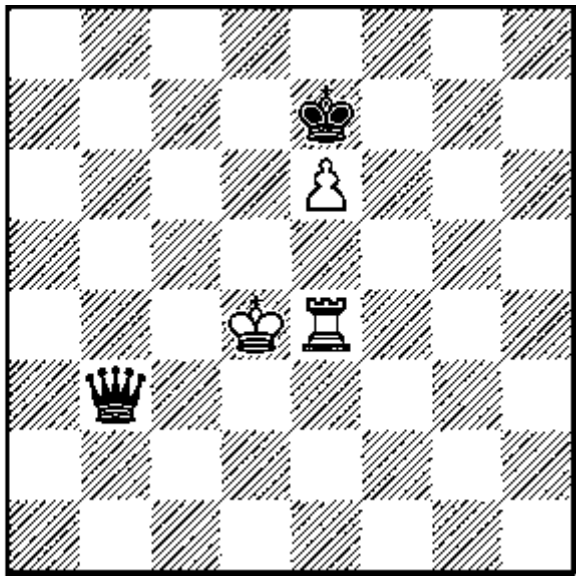
2 Kd5 Qa2+ 3 Ke5 Qb2+ 4 Kf4 Qf2+ loses even faster.

2…Qd1!⊙

The familiar zugzwang position has arisen, but this time with White on move.

3 Re4 (3 Kc4 Qc2+ 4 Kd4 Qd2+) **3…Qf3+ 4 Kd4 Qb3⊙**

13-8
W



5 Ke5

If 5 Re3, then 5…Qc2! 6 Re4 Kd6! 7 Ke3 (7 e7 Qd2+ 8 Kc4 Qd5+) 7…Kd5!–+. After the king

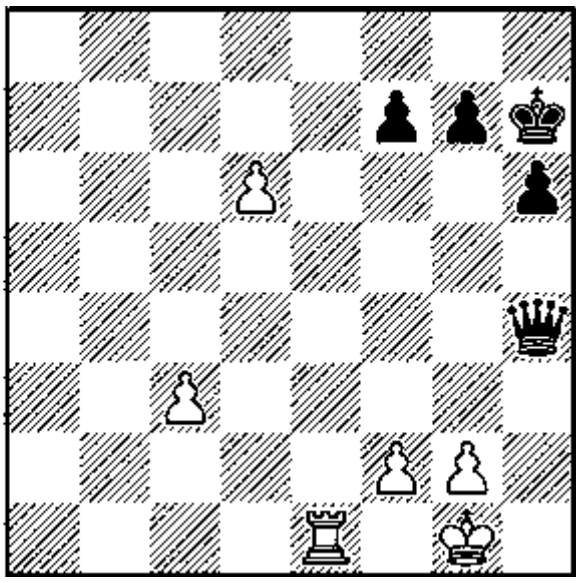
move, a similar finale happens on the other wing.

5…Qb2+ 6 Kf4 (6 Kd5 Qc3!⊙ 7 Re5 Qd3+ 8 Kc5 Qd6+) **6…Qf2+ 7 Kg4** (7 Ke5 Qf6+ 8 Kd5 Qc3!⊙) **7…Qg2+ 8 Kf4 Kf6! 9 Ke3** (9 e7 Qf2+ 10 Kg4 Qf5+) **9…Kf5!**–+.

I would like to mention here that in multi-pawn endings with a far-advanced passed pawn being supported by the rook from behind, a queen, when it must block the pawn, can be even weaker than a rook.

Bron – Ordel
Kharkov 1936

13-9



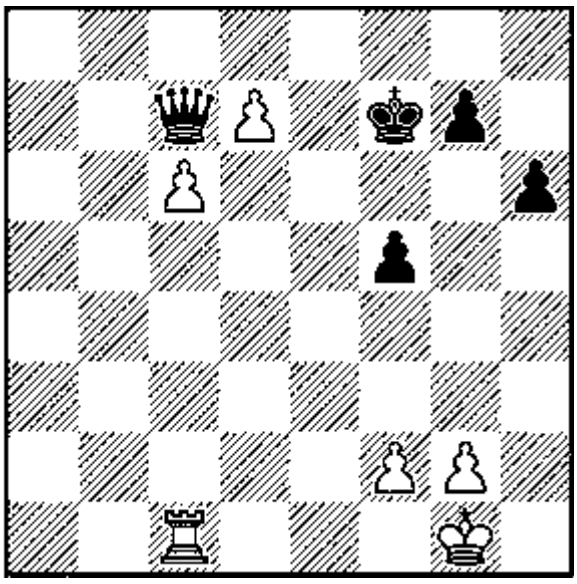
W

1 d7 Qd8 2 Rd1 Kg8 3 c4 Kf8 4 c5 Ke7 5 c6 f5?

Black could probably save the game after 5…Qa5! (△ 6…Kd8). The transition to the pawn endgame via 6 d8Q+ is unfavorable for White, the rook has no e1-square, while 6 Rd3 is met by 6…Qe1+ 7 Kh2 Qe5+ 8 g3 Kd8 9 Re3 Qh5+ 10 Kg1 Qd1+ with perpetual check.

6 Re1+ Kf7 7 Rc1! Qc7

13-10



W?

8 g3!

8 Kf1! is equivalent. 8 Rd1? Ke7 9 Re1+ Kf7 10 Re8 (10 g3 Qd6!) is premature in view of 10…Qf4! 11 d8Q (11 Re1 Qd2; 11 g3 Qc1+ 12 Kh2 Qf1) 11…Qc1+ 12 Re1 (12 Kh2 Qf4+) 12…Q×e1+ 13 Kh2 Q×f2 and White cannot escape from checks (Dvoretsky).

8…f4 9 Rd1 Ke7 (9…Qd8 10 c7) **10 Re1+ Kf7 11 Re8 Q×c6 12 d8N+!** Black resigned.

Now we come to the most important class of positions: the king protects the pawn while the

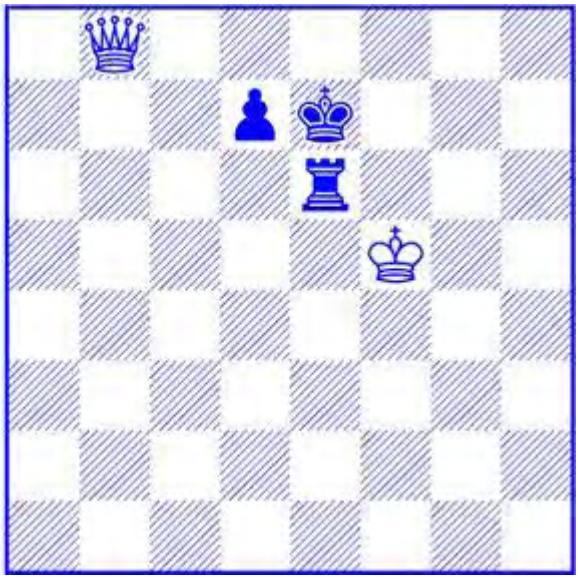
rook tries to keep hostile pieces away from it.

The Pawn on the Seventh Rank

Philidor, 1777

13-11

W



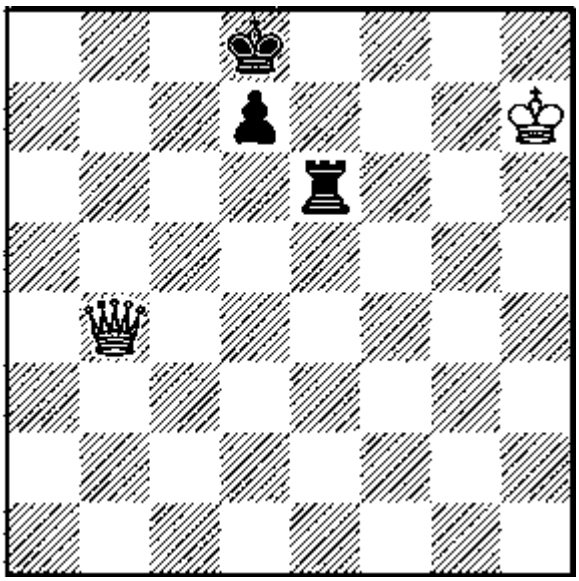
1 Qh8 Rc6=

Black holds his king on the seventh and eighth ranks, preventing the white queen from entering the important d8-square. The rook has two protected squares at its disposal (e6 and c6); therefore a zugzwang cannot be created.

V. Khenkin, 1981*

13-12

$



If the white king has crossed the sixth rank, Black's position is no longer foolproof. For example, this case depends on who is on move.

Black on move achieves a draw after 1…Kc7(c8)!. ***He should keep a distance between the kings in order to avoid mate threats.***

White on move wins.

1 Qb8+! Ke7 2 Kg7 (△ 3 Qf8#) **2…Rc6** (2…Rd6 3 Qb4) **3 Qf8+ Ke6 4 Qf6+** 4 Qb4!⊙ Kd5 5 Kf7 Re6 6 Qb7+ Kd6 7 Qb6+ Kd5 8 Qc7 is also good (Dvoretsky).

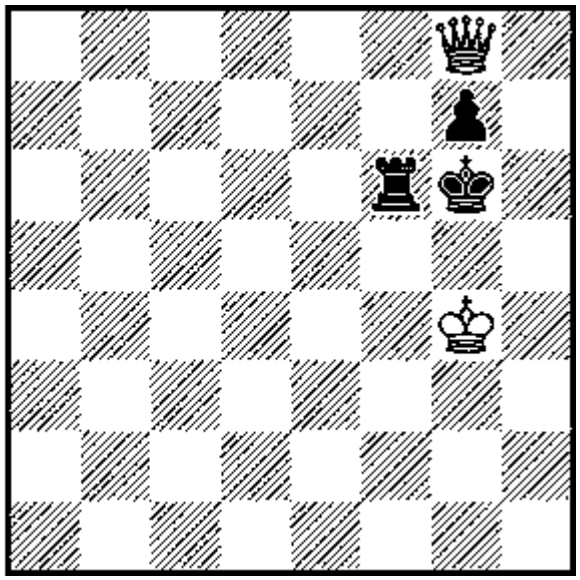
4…Kd5 5 Qd8 Kd6 6 Kf7

The queen has occupied the important d8-square, and now the king can attack the pawn. His opponent, forced to stand in front of the pawn, only hinders his own rook.

6…Rc5 7 Qb6+ Rc6 8 Qb8+ Kd5 9 Ke7+–.

V. Khenkin, 1981

13-13
$



B

The closer the pawn is to the edge, the greater the defensive resources. This sort of position (with the king in front of the pawn) is lost when the pawn is central. With a bishop pawn, the outcome depends on specifics of piece placement. Here (with a knight pawn) Black holds a draw easily; the same is valid against a white king on e5, but not if the king gets to e7. Khenkin analyzed 1…Rf1 (but of course not 1…Kh6?? 2 Qh8+ Kg6 3 Qh5#) 2 Qd5 Rg1+ 3 Kh3 (3 Kf3 Rf1+ 4 Kg3 Rf6=) 3…Kh7 4 Kh4 Kh8 5 Kh5 Kh7 6 Qe4+ Kh8, and White cannot make any progress. If his queen abandons the a8-h1 diagonal, Black transposes into the drawn Philidor position after …Rh1-h6.

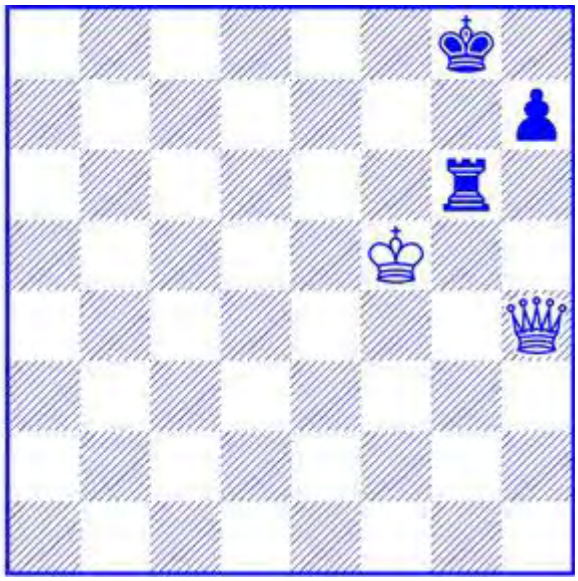
However, White wins if he, instead of 2 Qd5?, plays 2 Qe8+! Kh7 (2…Rf7 3 Kh4 Kf6 4 Kh5) 3 Qh5+ Kg8 4 Qd5+ Kf8 (4…Kh8 5 Qd8+ Kh7 6 Qd3+) 5 Qc5+ Kg8 6 Qc4+ Rf7 7 Kg5.

To avoid the double attack, Black should place his rook on a dark square. 1…Rf2! 2 Qd5 Kh7 is an easy draw; 1…Rd6! and 1…Rb6! are also good.

With the rook pawn on the seventh rank, Black is lost because the rook has only one protected square at its disposal.

J. Berger, 1921*

13-14



W

1 Qe7

Black is in zugzwang! Any move drastically worsens his position.

(a) 1…Rg2 2 Qd8+ Kg7 3 Qd4+ Kh6 4 Qe3+ Kg7 5 Qc3+! Kg8 6 Qc8+ Kg7 7 Qb7+;

(b) 1…Rg1 2 Qd8+ Kf7 3 Qc7+ Kg8 4 Qb8+ Kg7 5 Qa7+;

(c) 1…Kh8 2 Qf8+ Rg8 3 Qf6+ Rg7 4 Ke6! (4 Qe5? h6!= is wrong: you can find the situation with the rook pawn on the sixth rank in the next section) 4…h5 5 Qh6+;

(d) 1…Rh6 2 Kg5 Rg6+ 3 Kh5 Kh8 (3…Ra6 4 Qd8+ Kg7 5 Qc7+) 4 Qf8+ Rg8 5 Qf6+ Rg7 6 Kh6+–.

1…Ra6 2 Qd8+ Kg7 3 Qd7+ Kh6 4 Qb7 Rd6 (4…Ra3 5 Qc6+ Kg7 6 Qd7+) **5 Qe7 Rg6**

Reciprocal zugzwang. White, with the help of a triangulating queen maneuver, gives his opponent the move.

I would like to make a comment here: White could have obtained this position with Black to move by playing 4 Qc7!⊙ Rg6 5 Qe7! at once.

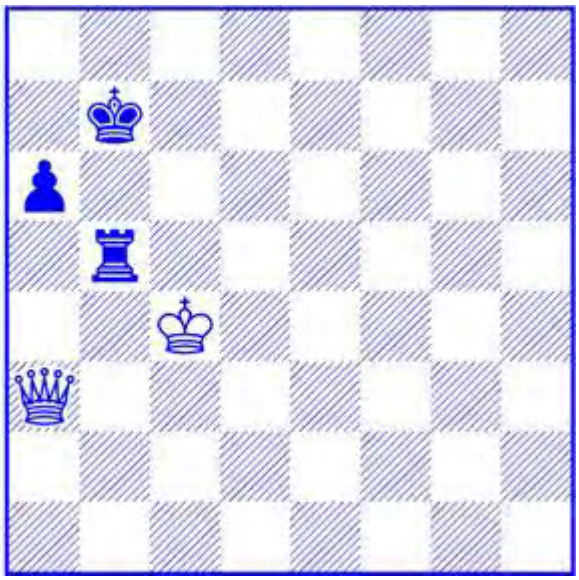
6 Qf8+ Kh5 7 Qf7 Kh6 8 Qe7!⊙ Rg2 9 Qe3+ Kg7 10 Qc3+ Kf7 11 Qc7+ Kg8 12 Qb8+ Kg7 13 Qb7+.

The Pawn on the Sixth Rank

Our survey starts with a rook pawn. If it stands on its initial position then, as we already know, the stronger side wins. With the black pawn on the sixth rank, the position is drawn.

B. Guretzky-Cornitz, 1864

13-15



The rook has only one protected square (b5), therefore the white king breaks through using a zugzwang technique. However White's achievements end with that: he can neither force a win of the rook nor smoke the king out from the corner.

1 Qe7+ Kb8 2 Qe8+ Kb7 3 Qd8 Ka7 4 Qc8 Rb7!

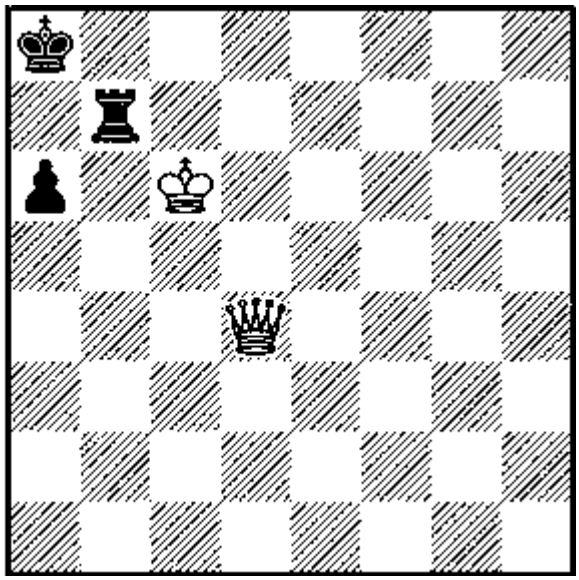
Black should by no means abandon the corner. 4…Kb6? loses after 5 Qb8+ Kc6 (5…Ka5 6 Qd8+ Ka4 7 Qd2 Ka3 8 Qd6+) 6 Qa7 Rb6 (6…Ra5 7 Kb4 Rb5+ 8 Ka4 Rb6 9 Ka5) 7 Kd4 Kb5 (7…Rb4+ 8 Kc3 Rb6 9 Kc4⊙) 8 Qd7+ Kb4 9 Qc7 Rh6 10 Qe7+ Ka4 11 Qe8+ Ka5 12 Kc5.

5 Qc5+

This is stronger than 5 Kc5 Rb5+ 6 Kc6 Rb6+ 7 Kc7 Rb5 8 Qg4 Rb7+ 9 Kc6 Rb6+.

5…Ka8 6 Qd6 Ka7 7 Qd4+ Ka8 8 Kc5 Ka7 9 Kc6+ Ka8

13-16



W

10 Qd8+ Rb8 11 Qa5 Ka7 12 Qc7+ Ka8 13 Qf4 Rb7!=

This precise defensive move prevents occupation of the important c7- and c8-squares by the white king. 13…Rb5? is not correct in view of 14 Kc7! Ka7 (14…Rb7+ 15 Kc8 Rb5 16 Qc7) 15 Qd6 Rb8 16 Qc5+ Ka8 17 Qc6+ Ka7 18 Qd6! (decisive zugzwang) 18…Rb7+ 19 Kc8 Rb5 20 Qd7+ Ka8 21 Qc7⊙ Rb1 22 Qc6+ Ka7 23 Qc5+ Ka8 24 Qd5+ Ka7 25 Qd4+ Ka8 26 Qe4+.

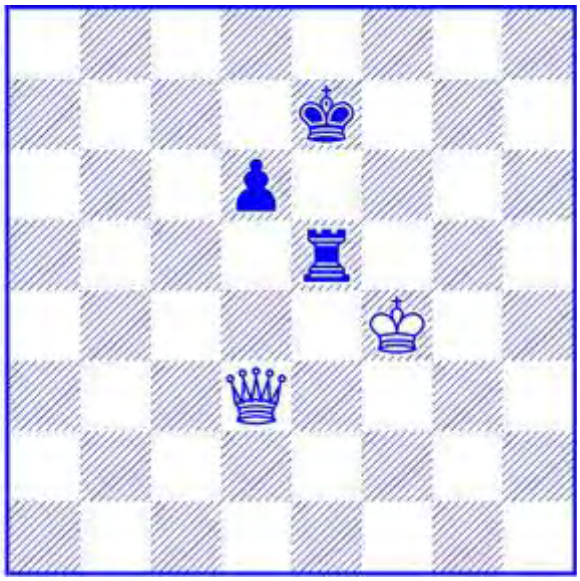
We should add that if we shift the starting position one or two ranks lower, Black loses. Too many squares demand protection behind the pawn in this case, and the pieces cannot successfully tackle this problem.

As Khenkin stated, White wins against the pawn on a6, too, if his king is standing on the a-file. He prepares Ka5 by means of resolute queen actions, pushing the black king away from the seventh rank and the rook away from b5.

If the black pawn is a central or a bishop pawn and stands on the fifth or sixth rank, Black is lost.

Philidor, 1777

13-17



W

White's plan consists of the following stages:

(a) To occupy squares behind the pawn, with the help of zugzwang, and drive the black king to d5 where it will obstruct its own rook.

(b) To cross the fifth rank with his king.

(c) To break through with the king via the e-file to the d6-pawn.

1 Qh7+ Kd8

Both 1…Kf8? 2 Qd7 and 1…Ke8? 2 Qc7 are hopeless. In case of 1…Ke6?! 2 Qc7 Rc5 3 Qd8, White's mission becomes easier than after the text move.

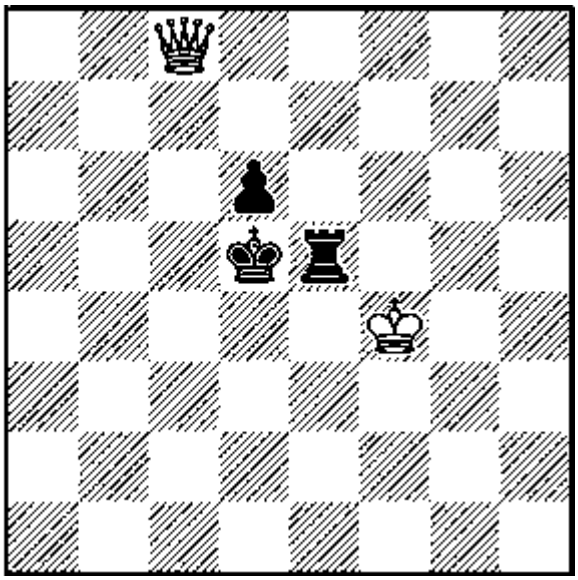
2 Qf7!⊙ Kc8

This is better than 2…Re7? 3 Qg8+ Kd7 4 Kf5; 2…Rc5?! 3 Qe6 Kc7 4 Qe7+ Kc6 5 Qd8 Re5 6 Qc8+ Kd5 7 Qa8+ Ke6 8 Qe8+ Kd5 9 Qc8! transposes into the main line.

3 Qa7 Kd8 (3…Rc5? 4 Qe7) **4 Qb8+ Kd7 5 Qb7+ Kd8 6 Qc6! Ke7 7 Qc7+ Ke6 8 Qd8 Kd5** (the same is 8…Rf5+ 9 Kg4 Re5 10 Qe8+ Kd5 11 Qc8) **9 Qc8!?** (Chéron recommended 9 Qd7!?)

13-18

B



The first stage ends successfully. Black is in zugzwang and he is forced to give way to the white king because 9…Rh5? loses immediately: 10 Qa8+ Kd4 11 Qa4+. If 9…Kd4, then 10 Qc6 Rd5 and, according to Salvioli, 11 Kf3! Ke5 (11…Rf5+ 12 Kg4 Rd5 13 Kf4⊙) 12 Ke3 Rc5□ 13 Qe8+ Kf6 (13…Kf5 14 Qf7+ Ke5 15 Qe7+) 14 Qd7 Rd5 15 Ke4+–.

9…Re4+ 10 Kf5 Re5+ 11 Kf6

The second stage is also fulfilled.

11…Re4

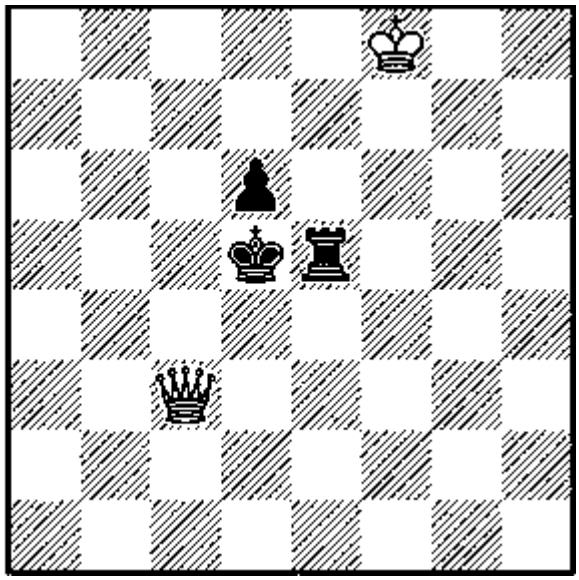
Both 11…Re1 12 Qb7+ Kc5 13 Qc7+ Kd5 14 Qa5+ and 11…Re2 12 Qa8+ Kd4 13 Qa4+ Kc5 14 Qa3+ lose rapidly.

12 Qc3!

A neat method that stems from Guretzky-Cornitz (1864). Philidor analyzed a slightly slower process: 12 Qf5+ Re5 13 Qd3+ Kc5 14 Qd2!, while the computer prefers 12 Qb7+ Kd4 13 Qc6 d5 14 Qb6+ Kd3 (14…Kc4 15 Kf5⊙) 15 Qc5 d4 16 Qa3+ Ke2 (16…Kc4 17 Qc1+; 16…Kc2 17 Qb4) 17 Qb2+ Ke3 18 Qc1+ Ke2 19 Qc2+ Ke3 20 Kf5 Rf4+ 21 Ke5 d3 22 Qc5+ Kf3 23 Qc6+ Ke3 24 Qh6.

12…Re6+ (12…Re5 13 Kf7!⊙) **13 Kf7 Re5 14 Kf8!**

13-19



B

Zugzwang again. Black must let the white king cross the e-file.

14…Re4

14…Ke4 15 Qc4+ Kf5 16 Qd3+ Ke6 17 Ke8+–, or 14…Re6 15 Qb3+ Ke5 16 Kf7 Rf6+ 17 Ke7+–.

15 Qd3+ Rd4

Or 15…Ke5 16 Ke7 d5 17 Qg3+ Rf4 (17…Kd4+ 18 Kd6 Kc4 19 Qg2 Rd4 20 Qc2+; 17…Kf5+ 18 Kd6 d4 19 Qd3 Kf4 20 Kd5) 18 Qe3+ Re4 19 Qg5+ Kd4+ 20 Kd6.

16 Qf5+ Kc4 17 Qc2+ Kd5 18 Ke7 Ke5 19 Kd7 Rd5 20 Qe2+ Kf4 21 Kc6 Rd4 22 Kb5 Kf5 23 Qe3 Re4 24 Qd3 Ke5 25 Kc6 Rd4 26 Qe3+ Re4 27 Qg5+ Ke6 28 Qg6+ Ke5 29 Q×d6+.

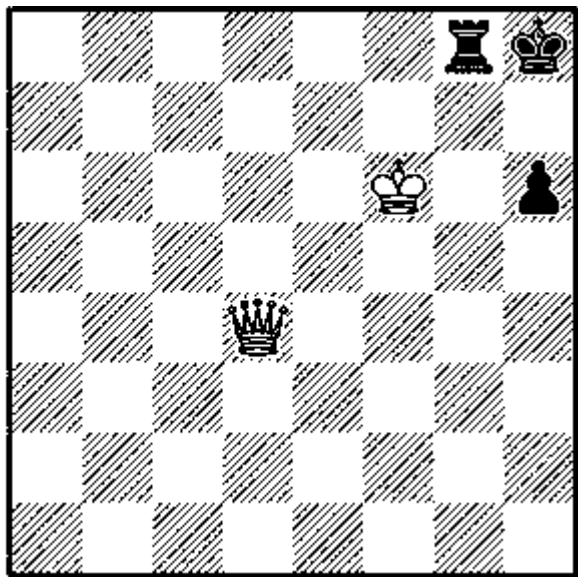
An analogous plan succeeds against a black pawn on d5. With the pawn on d4, Black also loses. If the pawn stands on c6 or c5, White wins too, although his task is even more complicated.

Tragicomedies

Penrose – Hartston

England ch, Coventry 1970

13-20



B?

1…Kh7??

Black should not let the white king settle on the f7- and f8-squares. 1…Rg7! led to a draw.

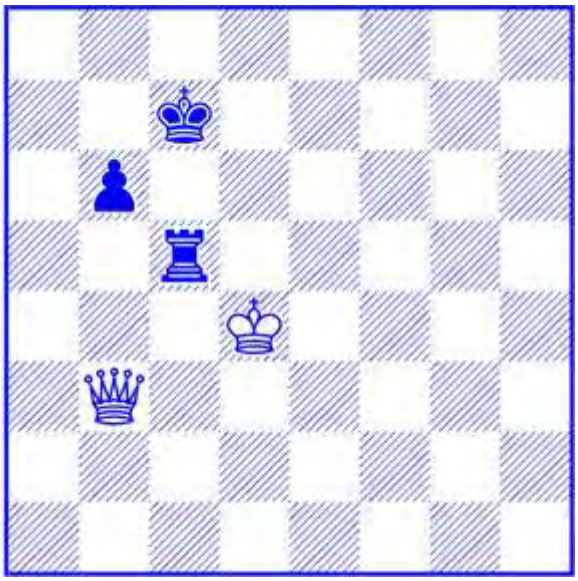
2 Kf7+– Rg5 3 Qf6 Rg8 4 Qe6⊙ Rg5 5 Kf8 h5 6 Qf7+ Kh6 7 Qf6+ Rg6 8 Qf4+ Kh7 9 Qe5! Kh6 10 Kf7 h4 11 Qe4 Black resigned.

A Knight Pawn on the Fifth or Sixth Rank

A draw still can be achieved when a knight pawn has left the seventh rank. If it is standing on the sixth rank, Black should keep his king behind it; if the pawn has reached the fourth or fifth rank; the king may be placed in front of it as well.

B. Guretzky-Cornitz, 1864

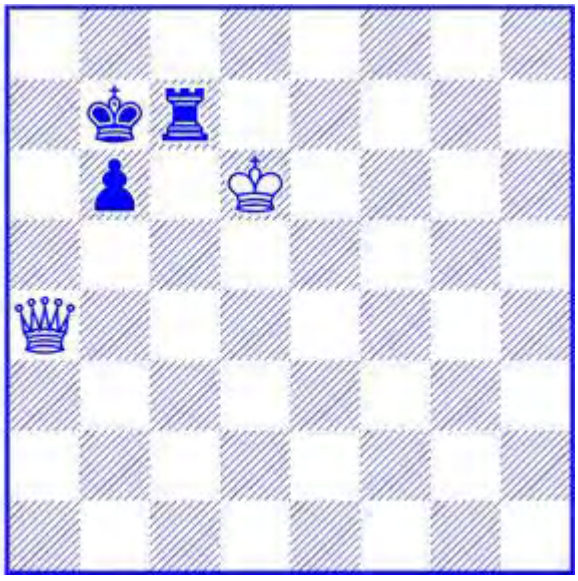
13-21



1 Qf7+ Kb8! 2 Qe6 Kb7 3 Qd7+ Kb8 4 Ke4 Ka8 5 Qa4+ Kb7 6 Kd4 Rc7! Black lets the white king go ahead in order to keep his own king behind the pawn.

7 Kd5 Rc5+ 8 Kd6 Rc7

13-22



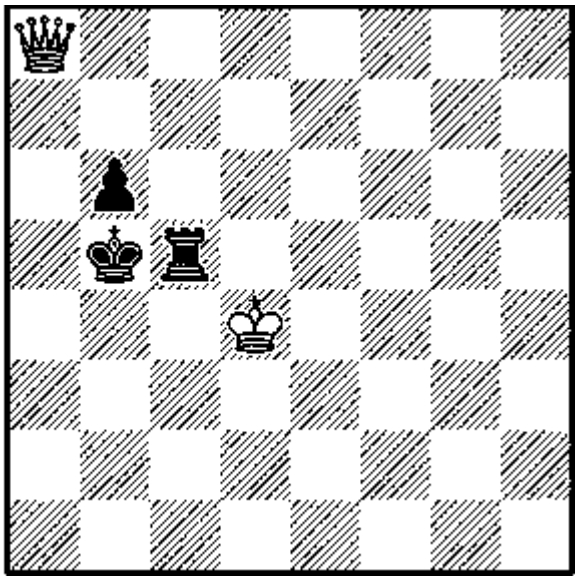
The main difference in this position from those with a bishop pawn or a central pawn, is the impossibility of queen attacks against the king from the left. The defensive method is similar to that with the a6-pawn (diagram 13-12).

And, as Khenkin noted, even with the white king on d8 (while the queen is standing on e6 and the rook on c5) there is no win: unlike the case of a rook pawn (won for White), Black holds here thanks to the waiting move Ka7.

9 Qb5 Rc5 10 Qd7+ Kb8 11 Qg4 Rc7 12 Qe2 (△ 13 Qa6) **12…Kb7!**=.

Now let us investigate 6…Ra5? (instead of the correct continuation 6…Rc7!) 7 Qd7+ Kb8 8 Qc6 Ka7 9 Qc7+ Ka6 10 Qb8 Rc5 11 Qa8+ Kb5.

13-23
$

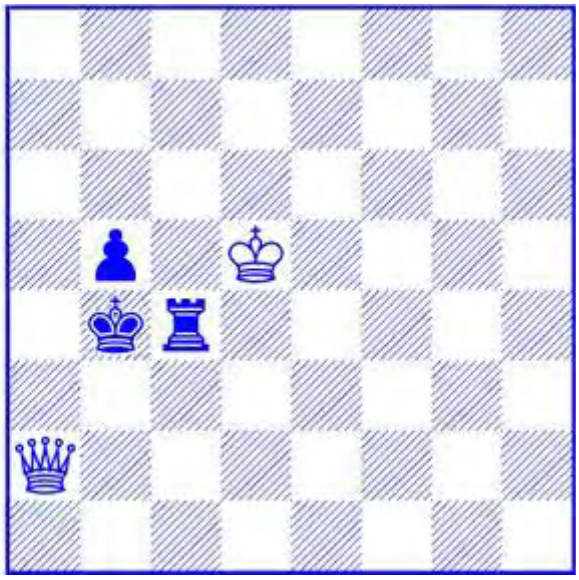


W

Guretzky-Cornitz evaluated this position as drawn. However Chéron proved in 1950 that White wins, although in a very complicated way. (First of all White should pass the move, for example 12 Qb7! Ka5 13 Qa7+ Kb5 14 Qa8!). Let us accept this as fact and anyone who wants to know more may look in endgame handbooks.

B. Guretzky-Cornitz, 1864

13-24



B

Another important case of a draw. If shifted down or with the black king on b6, it remains drawn.

1…Rc5+ 2 Kd6 Rc8!

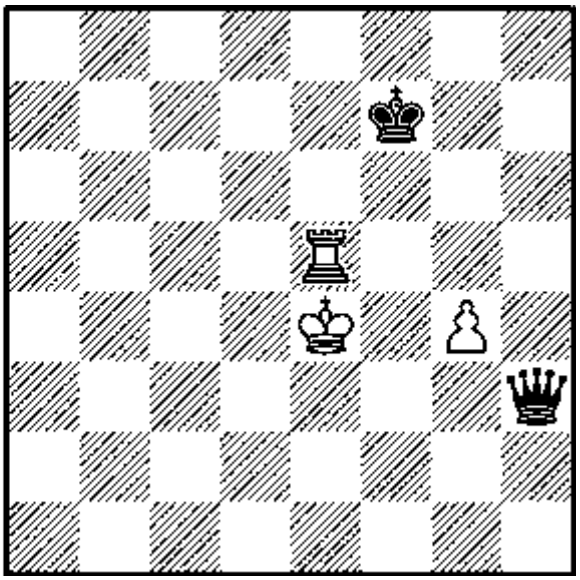
The rook is safe here, as opposed to similar situations with a central pawn.

3 Kd7 Rc4 4 Kd8 Rc5 5 Qb2+ Ka4! (but not 5….Kc4? 6 Kd7+–) **6 Kd7 Rc4=** (or 6…b4=).

Piket – McShane
Germany tt 1997

13-25

W?



1 Rf5+!

Surely not 1 Kf4? Qh2+ 2 Kf5 Qf2+ 3 Ke4 Kg6, and as White's king is cut off from the pawn, he loses.

1…Kg6 2 Kf4 Qh2+

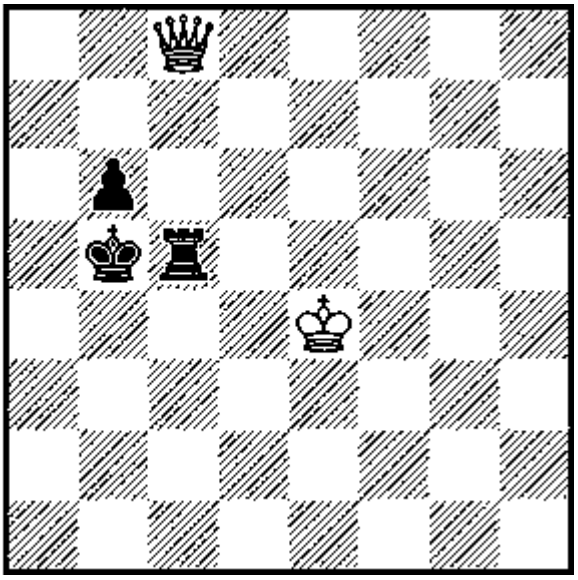
If 2…Qg2, then 3 Rg5+! Kf6 4 Rf5+ Ke6 5 Kg5= (see diagram 13-24).

3 Kf3 Qg1 4 Rh5! Qf1+ 5 Kg3 Qe2 6 Rf5 Qe4 7 Kh3 Qe1 8 Kg2 Qe3 9 Kh2 Qe4 10 Kg3 Q×f5 Draw.

Exercises

13-26

13/2
W?



Queen and Pawn vs. Rook and Pawn

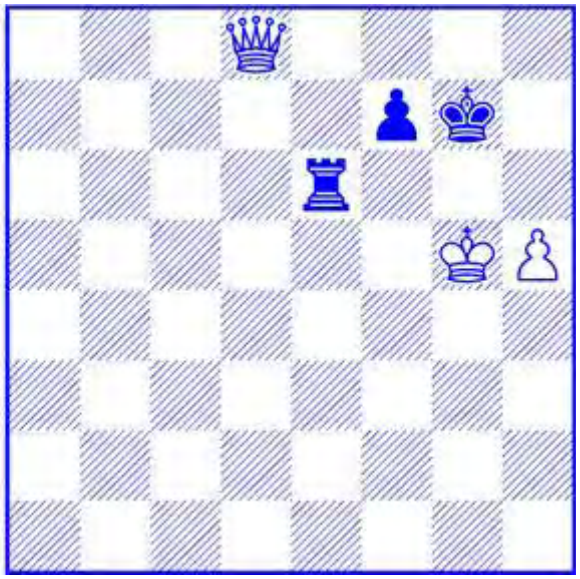
Passed Pawns

If the pawns are passed, a queen usually wins with ease, but a single important exception exists.

N. Grigoriev, 1917

13-27

W



Grigoriev did an analysis of the diagrammed position, but it was only discovered among his archives in 1954. Independently, Kasparian published an analysis in 1948. He did not know Grigoriev's conclusions and managed to discover the truth independently when he checked one of his endgame studies for correctness.

***The rook has two safe squares, e6 and h6; therefore White cannot create a zugzwang position. The defense is rather simple: Black should not give the f8-square to the white queen and should not permit* h5-h6.**

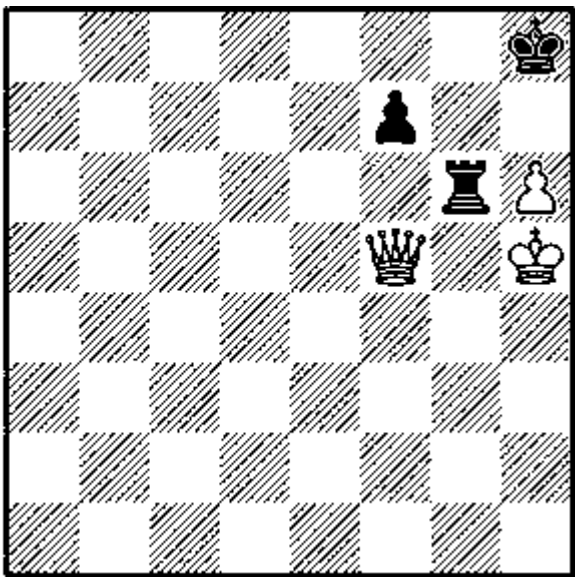
1 Qd4+ Kh7 2 Qc3 Rh6 3 Qb4 (threatening 4 Qf8) **3…Kg7! 4 Qb3 Re6 5 Qh3 Rh6!** (preventing 6 h6+) **6 Qh1 Kh7!=**

In case of 5…Rc6? White wins by means of 6 h6+! Kh7 7 Qf5+ Rg6+ 8 Kh5 Kh8.

13-28

$

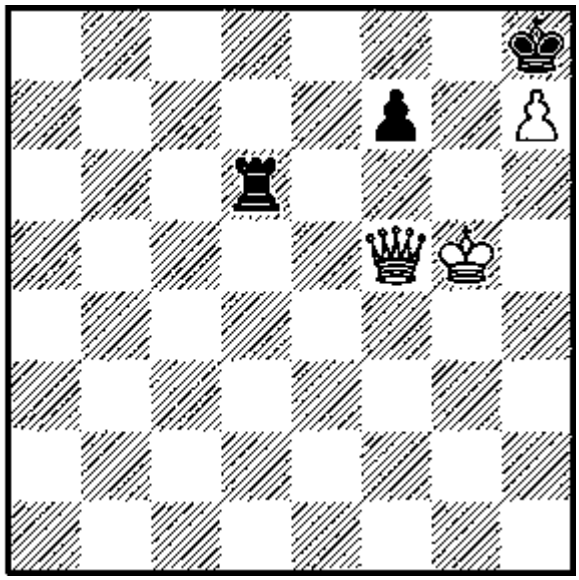
W



The f7-pawn is obviously invulnerable: 9 Q×f7?? Rg5+ (or 9…R×h6+), and the rook becomes a desperado. However White wins rapidly by means of 9 Qc8+! Rg8 (9…Kh7 10 Qf8) 10 Qc3+ Kh7 11 Qf6+–.

In the game Andric-Rogulj, where this position occurred (with reversed colors and wings), White played 9 h7?. His opponent resigned right away, although he could have made White's task truly difficult by playing 9…Re6! (rather than 9…Rg7? 10 Qc8+ K×h7 11 Qf8⊙ or 9…Kg7? 10 Q×f7+! K×f7 11 h8Q) 10 Kg5 (10 Q×f7? Rh6+ 11 Kg5 Rg6+! 12 Kf5 Rg5+) 10…Rd6.

13-29



W

If White chooses 11 Qc8+? K×h7 12 Qf8 Rg6+ 13 Kf5, Black manages to hold after 13…Rf6+! 14 Kg5 (or 14 Ke5 Re6+ 15 Kd5 Rf6=) 14…Rg6+ 15 Kh5 Rf6! 16 Qe7 Rh6+ 17 Kg5 Rg6+ 18 Kf5 Kg7=.

The winning continuation is 11 Kf4! Re6 12 Kf3⊙ (12 Q×f7? Re4+) 12…Rg6 13 Ke4 Rg7 (13…Re6+ 14 Kd4 Rg6 15 Kd5 Re6 16 Q×f7+–), and only now 14 Qc8+ K×h7 15 Qf8 Kg6 (15…Rg4+ 16 Kf5 Rg7 17 Qe8!⊙) 16 Ke5 Rh7 17 Qg8+ Rg7 18 Qh8⊙.

Returning to diagram 13-27, we should add that the ***evaluation of this position would be changed if the white king were standing on the seventh or the eighth rank***. For example, if the king is on d7 then 1 Qg5+ Kh7 2 h6 wins.

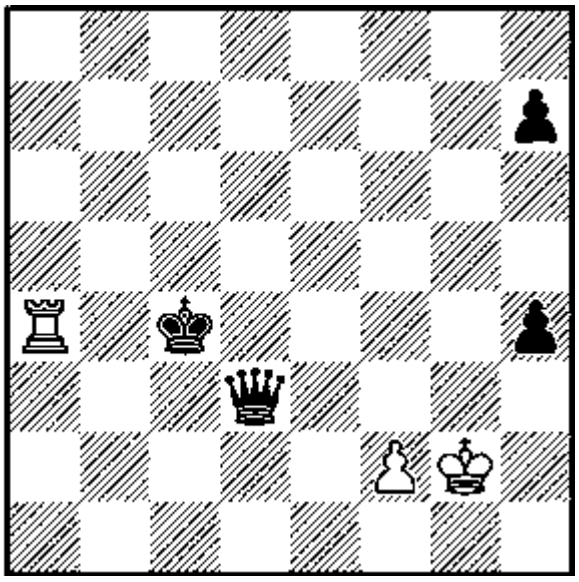
A draw also cannot be reached if all the pieces are shifted to the left or downwards.

As Grigoriev proved, Black loses if he has an additional pawn on h6. The reason is obvious: the pawn deprives the rook of the second protected square.

Tragicomedies

Averbakh – Bondarevsky
USSR ch, Moscow 1948

13-30



B?

Averbakh, in contrast to his opponent, knew Kasparian's freshly published analysis; this fact enabled him to hold this apparently hopeless position.

1…Kd5?

1…Kb3! 2 R×h4 Kc2 was an easy win.

2 R×h4 Ke6?

As Abramov demonstrated, Black could avoid Grigoriev's drawn position by playing 2…Qg6+! 3 Kh2 Qf5 4 Kg3 Qe5+ 5 Kf3 (5 Kg2 Qg5+ 6 Kh3 Qg1–+; 5 Rf4 h5 6 Kf3 Qg5–+) 5…Qg5 6 Rh3 Kd4 7 Rg3 Qd5+ 8 Kg4 Qh1–+.

3 Rh3!=

A draw has become inevitable.

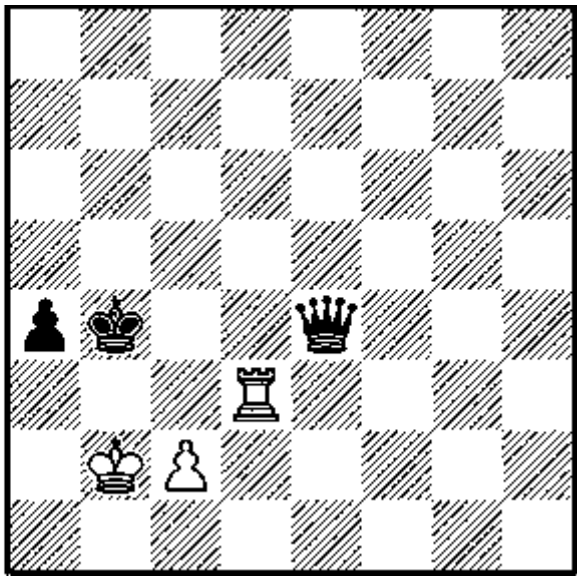
3…Qe4+ 4 Kh2 Kf6 5 Re3 Qd5 6 Rg3 h5 7 Re3 Kg5 8 Rg3+ Kf4 9 Re3 h4 10 Rh3 Qb7 11 Re3 Kg4 12 Rh3 Qb1 13 Kg2! Qh7 14 Kh2! Qc7+ 15 Kg2 Qc2 16 Re3 Draw.

Timman – Nunn

Wijk aan Zee 1982

13-31

W?



1 Ka2?? (1 Ra3! Qe5+ 2 Ka2 led to a draw) **1…a3!**

The pawn has crept in at a3, and White's position is lost now. He resigned in view of rather simple variations: 2 Kb1 Qe1+ 3 Ka2 Qc1 4 Rb3+ Ka4 and 2 Rb3+ Kc4 3 K×a3 Q×c2.

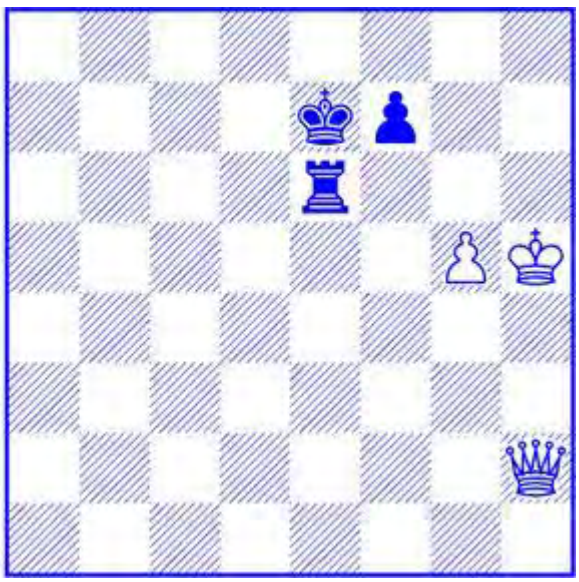
Pawns on Adjacent Files

Almost all positions with the pawns on the same files are lost. Positions with the pawns on adjacent files, however, are sometimes tenable, but only if the weaker side's pawn stands on its initial square.

In the next diagram, if Black is on move he holds by means of transferring his king to g7.

F. Dedrle, 1925*

13-32



1…Kf8! 2 Kg4 Kg7 3 Kf5 Rg6 4 Qb2+ Kh7

White cannot do anything as 5 Qf6 leads to a drawn pawn endgame.

If White is on move in the initial position, he wins by preparing a sacrifice of his queen for the rook.

1 Qb8! Rg6 2 Qb4+ Ke8 3 Qe4+ Re6 (3…Kf8 4 Q×g6!) **4 Q×e6+! fe 5 Kh6+–**

From this example, the following conclusions can be drawn:

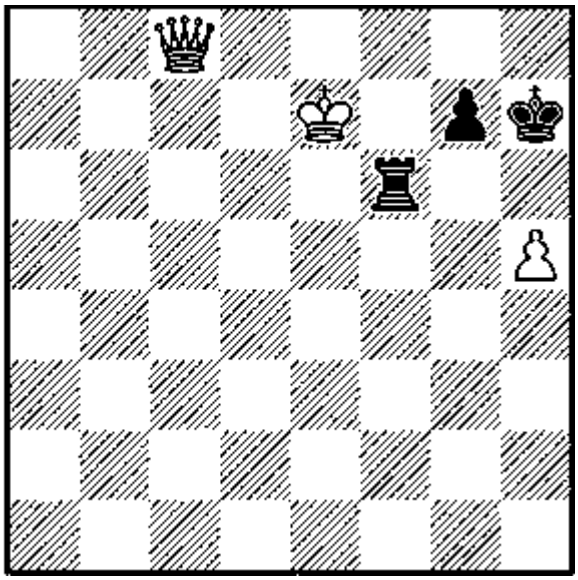
(1) An important technique of exploiting an advantage can be a queen sacrifice that results in a winning pawn endgame.

(2) The weaker side should keep his king in front of the opponent's pawn; this can often (but by no means always!) neutralize the threat of the queen sacrifice. If the pawn stands on e5 (instead of g5) the king should stay on e7.

(3) With the white king on the seventh rank, Black's position is most often lost.

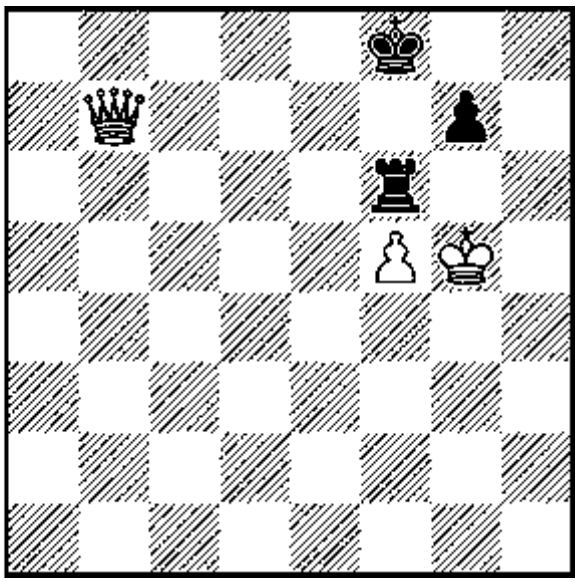
One should not accept these rules absolutely, exceptions sometimes happen.

13-33
$
W



1 Qc2+ Kg8= (rather than 1…Kh6?? 2 Qe4⊙+–). Although the white king has reached the seventh rank, there is still no win. The reason is that any pawn endgame with a rook pawn is drawn.

13-34
$
B



Black loses in spite of the fact that his king occupies a "regular" position in front of the pawn.

1…Rh6 2 Qd7

Zugzwang. If 2…Rf6, then 3 Qd8+ Kf7 4 Q×f6+ gf+ 5 Kh6 is decisive. **2…Kg8 3 Qe8+ Kh7** does not help. The king has abandoned the position in front of the pawn, and a queen sacrifice cannot be avoided any longer: **4 Kf4 Rf6 5 Ke5 Rh6 6 Qe6!**+–

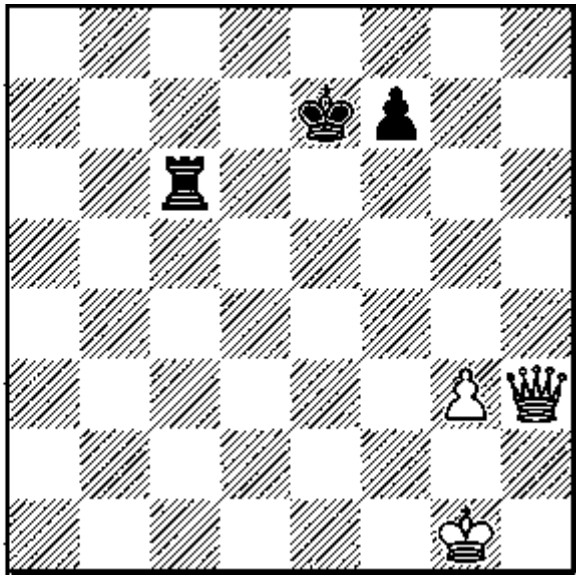
Now let us move the entire position after 2 Qd7 to the left by one file (Black's pawn on f7, rook on g6, etc.) There is no zugzwang any longer because Black has the waiting move 2…Rh6!; therefore White cannot win.

Tragicomedies

Sämisch – Prins
Hastings 1938/39

13-35

W



Sämisch agreed to a draw without any knowledge that he had a winning position. He had only to prevent the black king from coming to g7.

Here is Keres' analysis:

1 Qh4+ Kf8 2 Qh8+! Ke7 3 Kf2 Rg6 4 Kf3 Re6 5 Kg4 Rg6+ 6 Kh5 Re6 7 g4 Rg6 8 g5 Re6 9 Qb8 (Dedrle's position) 9…Rg6 10 Qb4+ Ke8 11 Qe4+ followed by a queen sacrifice.

A Fortress with Multiple Pawns

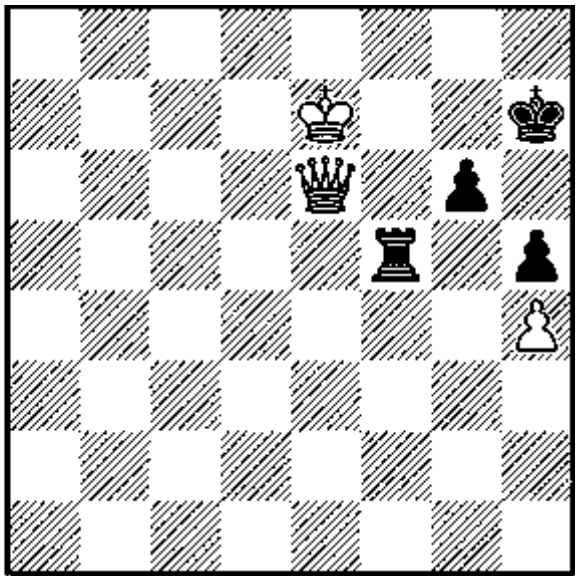
From the multitude of theoretically known positions where a rook opposes a queen more or less successfully, we select several of the most important and characteristic cases.

V. Khenkin, 1962

13-36

$

B



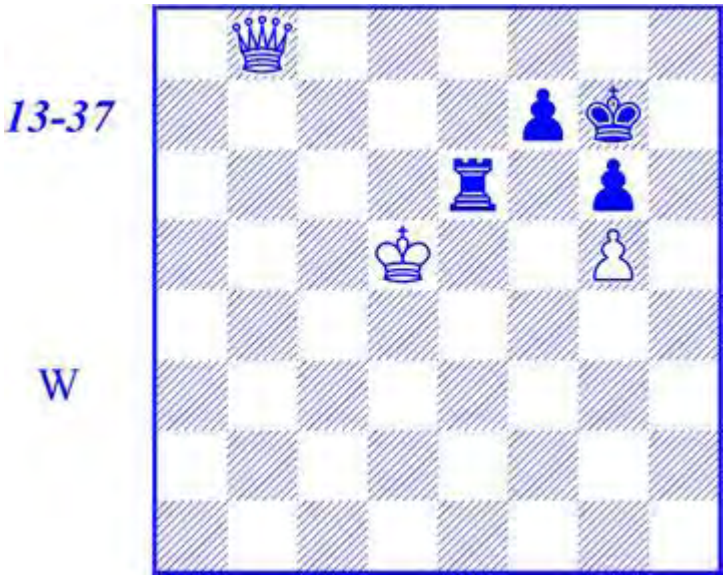
1…Kh8!?

Both 1…Kg7 and 1…Rf1 are not by any means worse than this.

2 Q×g6 Rf7+ (2…Re5+) **3 Ke6 Re7+**, with a draw by a stalemate or perpetual check.

With a shift up, the position is still drawn. But when shifted down, it is lost: White wins by means of a queen attack along the last rank.

V. Khenkin, 1966



As we know, a similar position, without the g6-pawn, is drawn. But here, when this pawn deprives the rook of the second protected square, White wins: he gradually approaches the black pawn with his king using the zugzwang technique.

It is worth mentioning that White is helpless in making any progress if his king is cut off in the right corner, be it in the diagrammed position or in many similar situations.

1 Qc7!⊙ Re3

Other moves are no better:

1…Ra6 2 Qc3+ Kh7 3 Qc4! Re6 (3…Ra5+ 4 Kd6 R×g5 5 Q×f7+ Kh6 6 Qf4 Kh5 7 Qh2+ Kg4 8 Qh6+–; 3…Rb6 4 Qc7 Rb5+ 5 Kd6 Rf5 6 Ke7+–) 4 Qc8 (threatening 5 Q×e6) 4…Re1 5 Qf8 Rf1 6 Kd6 with 7 Ke7 and 8 Q×f7+ to follow;

1…Kf8 2 Qc8+ Ke7 3 Qb8!⊙ Kd7 4 Qf8 Re7 5 Qg8 Kc7 6 Qa8 Rd7+ (6…Kd7 7 Qf8⊙) 7 Ke5+–.

2 Qc2! Kg8

If 2…Ra3 or 2…Rg3, 3 Qb2+ decides immediately; if 2…Re6, then 3 Qc3+ Kg8 (3…Kh7 4 Qh3+; 3…Kf8 4 Qc8+ Ke7 5 Qb8!⊙) 4 Qc8+ and 5 Q×e6.

3 Kd6 Re6+ 4 Kd7 Re3 (4…Kg7 5 Qc4!+–) **5 Qc4!**

The rook must leave the e-file because 5…Re1 6 Qc8+ is bad.

5…Ra3 6 Qe4 Kg7 7 Qe5+

This decides a bit more rapidly than Khenkin’s suggestion, 7 Ke7 Ra7+ 8 Ke8.

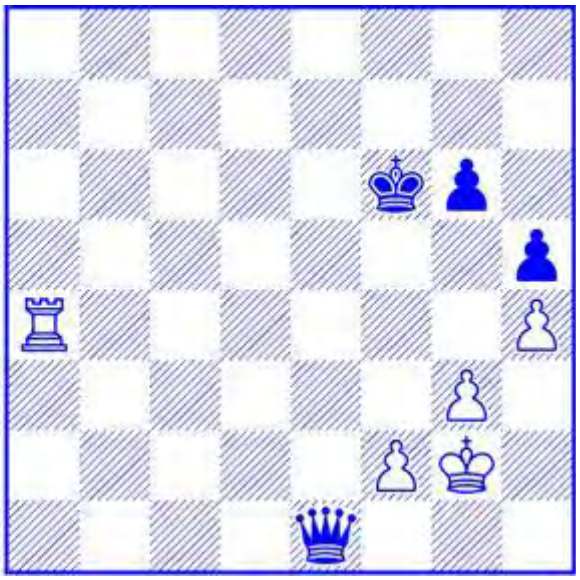
7…Kg8 8 Qb8+ Kh7 (8…Kg7 9 Qb2+) **9 Ke7**+–.

Dorfman – Beliavsky

Lvov zt 1978

13-38

W



Khenkin supplied a detailed analysis for this ending.

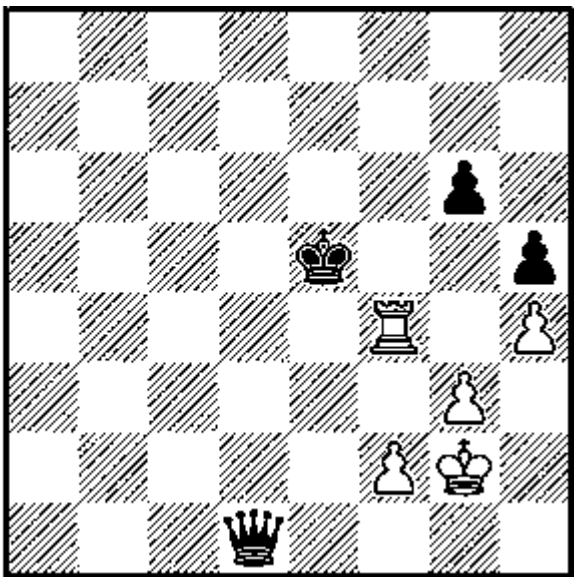
Where does the rook belong, on e3 or f4? It turns out that both squares are good when the black king is on d5; but the rook should stand on f4 (to protect g4) while the black king remains on the kingside.

A draw could be reached by means of 1 Rf4+! Ke5 2 Rf8 (2 Ra4 is also good) 2…Qe4+ 3 Kg1 Qc6 4 Rf4 Qc1+ 5 Kg2 Qd1.

13-39

$

W



If the rook remains on the fourth rank – 6 Rb4 – then after 6…Kd5 7 Rf4 Kc5, as theory says, 8 Re4? loses to 8…Qd5 9 Kf3 Kc6! 10 Ke3 (10 Kf4 Qd3! 11 Re8 Kc7! 12 Re7+ Kd8 13 Re4 Kd7☉) 10…Qd1!. Therefore White should play 8 Rf8!, giving way to the black king and planning a rook transfer to e3.

This maneuver can even be started immediately – 6 Rf8!? Qd5+ 7 Kg1 Ke4 8 Re8+ Kf3 9 Rf8+! Ke2 (9…Kg4?! 10 Kh2 Qd2 11 Kg2! g5□ 12 hg K×g5 13 Rf4= followed by Rh4-f4-h4) 10 Re8+ Kd2 11 Re3!=. Black cannot make any progress.

In the actual game, Dorfman undertook a premature transfer to e3.

1 Ra3? Qe4+ 2 Kh2 Kf5 3 Re3?!

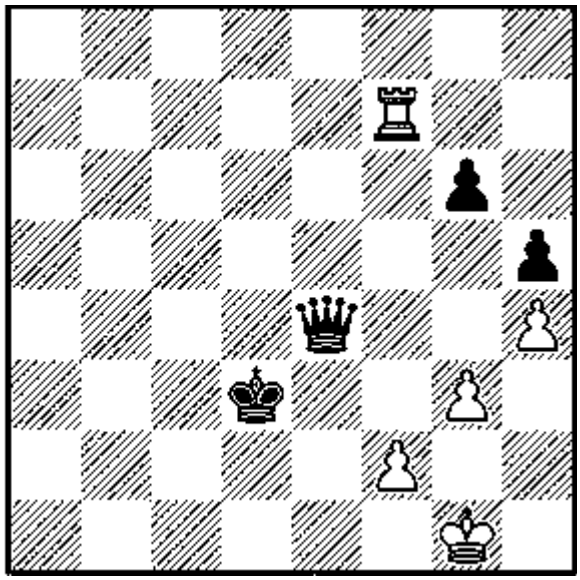
White loses rapidly after 3 Kg1 Qb1+ 4 Kg2 Qb7+ 5 Kh2 Kg4! (of course, not 5…Qb2? 6 Rf3+ Ke4 7 Re3+ Kd4 8 Kg2=) 6 Ra4+ Kf3 7 Rf4+ Ke2.

However after 3 Ra7!, the winning process would have been very complicated. In case of even the slightest inaccuracy White could have reached one of the drawn positions that have been mentioned above (with the rook on f4 or e3).

3…Qc6 (3…Kg4? 4 Rf7!=) 4 Rf7+ (4 Re7 Qf6! △ 5…Kg4–+) 4…Ke4 5 Kg1! Qd6! (5…Kd3? 6 Re7! △ Re3=) 6 Kg2 (6 Rf4+ Q×f4; 6 Kh2 Kd3) 6…Qd5! (6…Kd3? 7 Rf3+ and 8 Re3=;

6…Qe6? 7 Rf4+) 7 Rf8 Kd3+ 8 Kg1 Qc6! 9 Rf7! (10 Re7= is threatened) 9…Qe4!

13-40



W

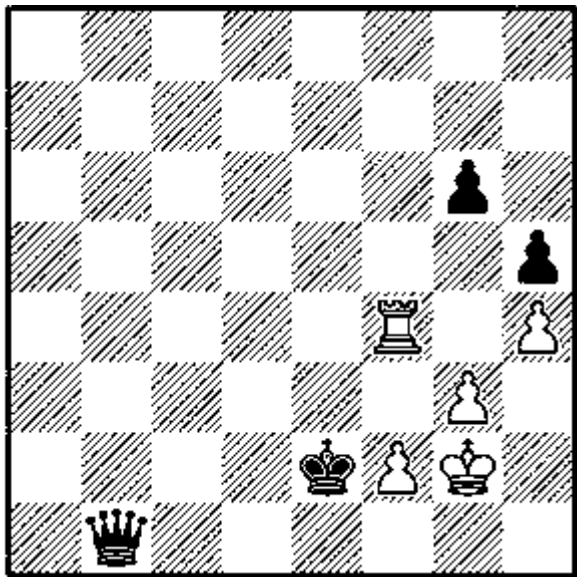
10 Rf4 Qe2 11 Kg2 (11 Rf8 Qe1+ 12 Kh2 Qe4! 13 Rf4 Qc6 14 Kg1 Ke2–+) 11…Kd2 12 Ra4 Qe6! 13 Rb4 (13 Ra3 Qc6+ 14 Kh2 Ke2) 13…Qd5+ 14 Kg1 Ke2 15 Rb2+ Kf3–+;

10 Ra7 Qb4! (△ 11…Ke2) 11 Ra6(a8) Qb1+ 12 Kh2 (12 Kg2 Qb7+) 12…Ke2–+; or 11 Kg2 Qc5! 12 Ra6 Qd5+ 13 Kg1 Ke2 14 R×g6 Qd1+ 15 Kh2 Kf1! (rather than 15…K×f2? 16 Rf6+ Ke3 17 Rf4, arriving at the drawn position from diagram 13-36) 16 Rb6 (16 Ra6 Qd4) 16…Qc2 17 Rf6 Qe4–+.

In the last line, Khenkin does not investigate the most stubborn defense, 11 Kf1!, preventing the king invasion to e2. Black responds with 11…Qd6!, planning to bring his king to g4. For example, 12 Ra1 (12 Kg2 Qc5!; 12 Ra2 Qc6!) 12…Qc6! 13 Ra3+ (13 Rd1+ Ke4 14 Kg2 Kf5+) 13…Ke4 14 Re3+ Kf5 15 Kg1 Kg4 etc.

3…Qd5 4 Kg1 (4 Re7 Kg4; 4 Re8 Qf7!) **4…Kg4** (threatening 5…Kh3) **5 Kh2 Qc6! 6 Ra3** (6 Rb3 Qc2) **6…Qc1! 7 Re3 Qf1 8 Re4+ Kf3 9 Rf4+ Ke2 10 Re4+ Kd3 11 Rf4 Qb1 12 Kg2 Ke2**

13-41



W

13 Rf6?

This leads to an immediate collapse. However, the best choice, 13 Rf8, was good enough only for postponing the deadly end for a while: 13…Qb7+ 14 Kg1 Qc6! 15 Rf4 Qa8!⊙ (the rook is forced to occupy a light square) 16 Rf7 Qa1+ 17 Kg2 Qf1+ 18 Kh2 Qd1! 19 Rf4 (19 Kg2 Qd5+) 19…Kf1–+.

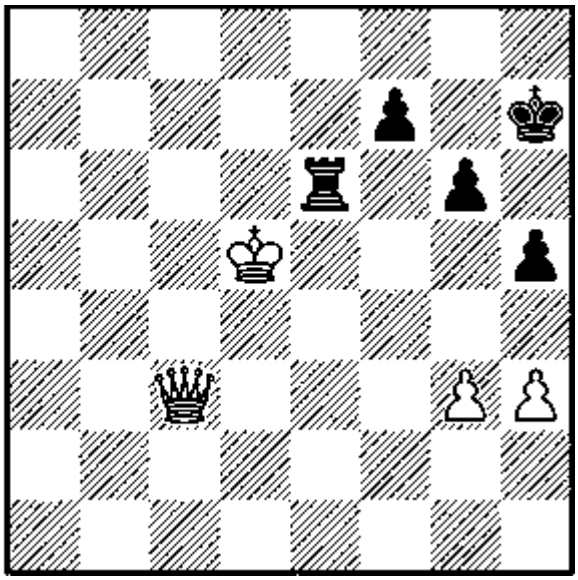
13…Qf1+ 14 Kh2 Qa1!

White resigned in view of the inevitable 15…Kf1.

To fully understand the following endgame, we should refresh our memories with the evaluations of several already known positions.

V. Khenkin, 1966

13-42
$
W?



As we know from the previous example, it would have been an easy draw if the white pawn had been standing on h4. Here, on the contrary, White has a clear plan: to push his pawn to g5, obtaining Khenkin's winning position from diagram 13-37.

However, the immediate 1 g4? hg 2 hg meets a strong response, 2…g5!=. When White wins the g5-pawn, the drawn position of Dedrle arises (diagram 13-32).

When analyzing it, we have mentioned that White wins if his king is on the seventh rank. From this, we come to the correct plan: first White should cross the fifth rank with his king and only then may he push the g-pawn.

1 Kc5! Kg8 2 Qd4 Kh7 3 Qd8 Kg7 4 Kb5⊙ Re1

Nothing else helps, viz.:

(a) 4…Kh7 5 Qf8+–;

(b) 4…Rf6 5 Qd4 g5 6 Qd8! Rg6 7 Kc5 h4 (7…g4 8 h4+–) 8 g4!+–;

(c) 4…Re4 5 Kc6 Rc4+ 6 Kd5 Rc3 7 Qb8 Rd3+ 8 Ke4 Rd1 9 Qb2+ Kg8 10 Qc3 Rd6 11 Ke5 Re6+ 12 Kf4 Kh7 13 Kg5+–.

5 Qd4+ Kg8 6 Kc6 Re6+

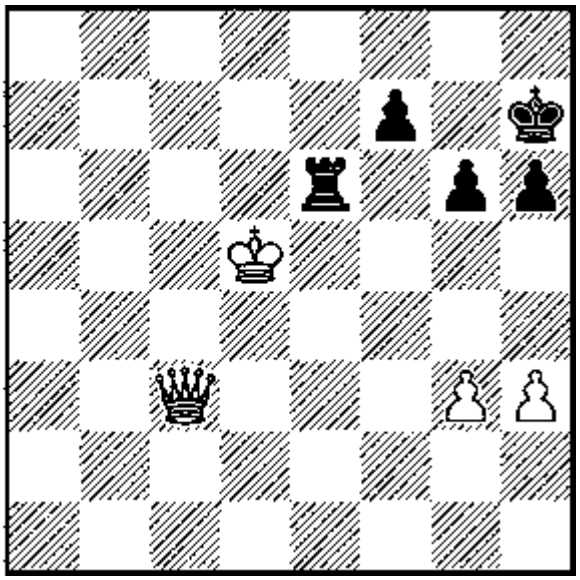
6…Rh1 7 Kd7! R×h3 8 Ke7 R×g3 9 Qf4 Ra3 10 Q×f7+ Kh8 11 Q×g6 is hopeless.

7 Kd7 Re1 8 g4! hg 9 hg

After 9…g5 10 Qd2 Re6 11 Q×g5+ or 9…Re6 10 g5!, we come to one of the aforementioned positions.

In the last diagram, move the h5-pawn to h6. The evaluation then changes.

13-43
$



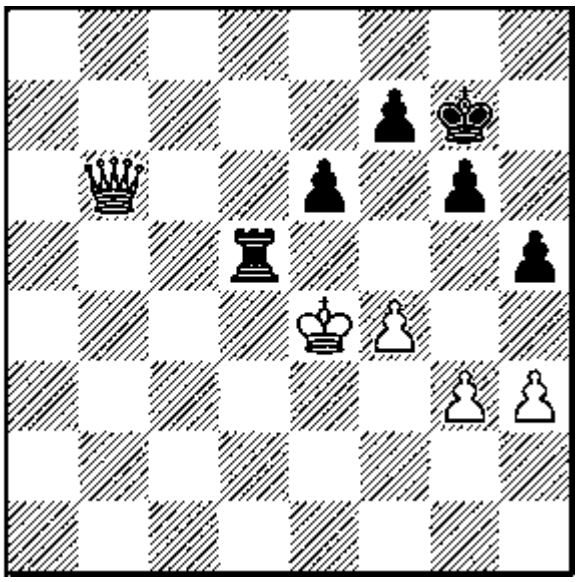
Black, if on move, plays **1…g5**, getting another protected square for the rook (g6). After **2 h4 gh 3 gh**, he comes to the drawn position of Grigoriev (diagram 13-27) by means of the pawn sacrifice **3…h5!**. He must sacrifice; otherwise White advances his pawn to h5 and wins.

If White is on move, he can prevent …g6-g5 solely by playing 1 h4, but then 1…h5!= follows.

M. Botvinnik, 1952

13-44
$

W



Botvinnik investigated this position (with reversed colors) when he analyzed his adjourned game versus Troianescu (1952). He proved that the inevitable queen sacrifice on d5 leads to a winning pawn endgame.

1 g4 hg 2 hg Kg8 3 Qc7 Kg7 4 Qc6 Kf8

Otherwise the white king breaks through: 4…Rd8 5 Qc3+ Kg8 6 Ke5 Kg7 7 f5! ef 8 gf Re8+ (8…gf 9 Qg3+ Kf8 10 Kf6) 9 Kf4+ Kg8 10 fg fg 11 Kg5 Re6 12 Qc7 Kf8 13 Qd7+– (Khenkin). 8…f6+!? 9 Kf4 Rd5 is more tenacious; it leads to a theoretical position with a bishop pawn on the sixth rank that is winning for White, although not easily.

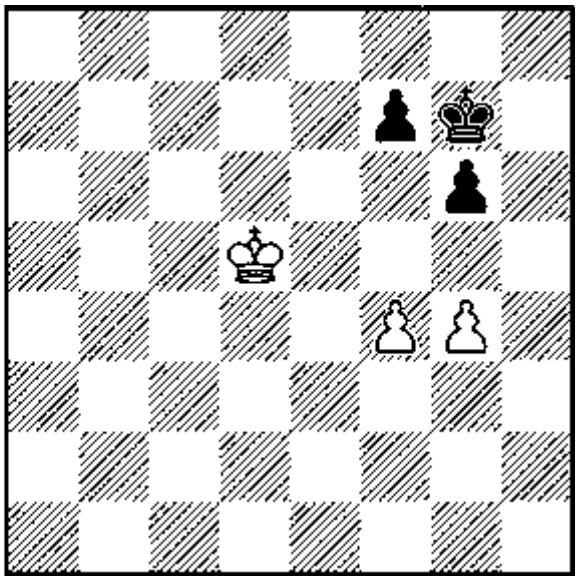
4…Rd1 5 Qc3+ Kg8 6 Ke5 Kg7 (6…Rf1 7 Qc4 Rg1 8 Kf6 R×g4 9 Qc7) 7 f5! ef 8 gf Rf1 (8…gf 9 Qg3+ Kf8 10 Kf6) 9 fg fg 10 Ke6+ Kg8. This line is given a strange verdict in endgame books: 11 Qd3 Rg1 12 Kf6+–. However after 11…Rf5! we come to a known drawn position. Therefore, instead of 11 Qd3?, White should play 11 Qh3!, threatening to invade h6.

5 Qa8+!

Prior to the queen sacrifice, White should drive the black king back. It cannot go to the center: 5…Ke7 6 Qa3+ Ke8 7 Qb4⊙+–.

5…Kg7 6 Q×d5! ed+ (6…f5+ 7 Ke5 ed 8 g5+–) **7 K×d5**

13-45



B

7…Kf8

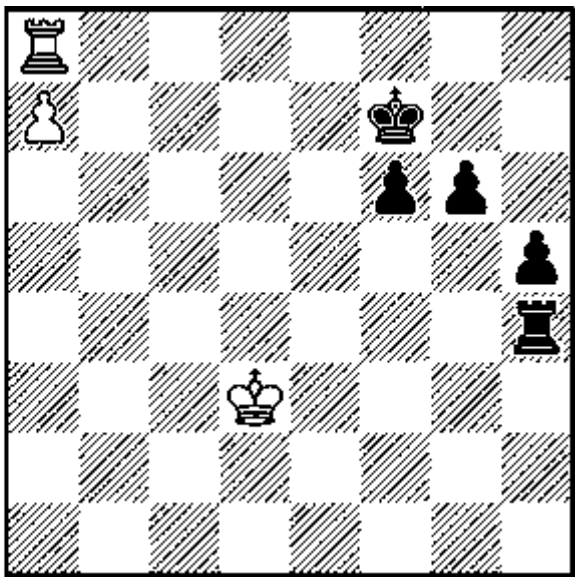
7…Kh6 8 Ke5 Kg7 9 Kd6 Kh8!? makes no difference: 10 Kd7 Kh7 11 Kd8! (11 Ke7? Kg8!) 11…Kg7 (11…Kh8 12 f5) 12 Ke8! (an opposition is required when the pawn stands on f5, but not in this case) 12…Kg8 13 Ke7 Kg7 14 f5 g5 15 Ke8+–.

8 Kd6 Ke8 9 f5! g5 10 Kc7 Ke7 11 Kc8! Kd6 12 Kd8 Ke5 13 Ke7 f6 14 Kf7+–.

Tragicomedies

Ambroz – Ciocaltea
Baile Herculane zt 1982

13-46



W?

After 1 Rb8 Ra4 2 a8Q R×a8 3 R×a8, the rook would easily get the upper hand against the three pawns.

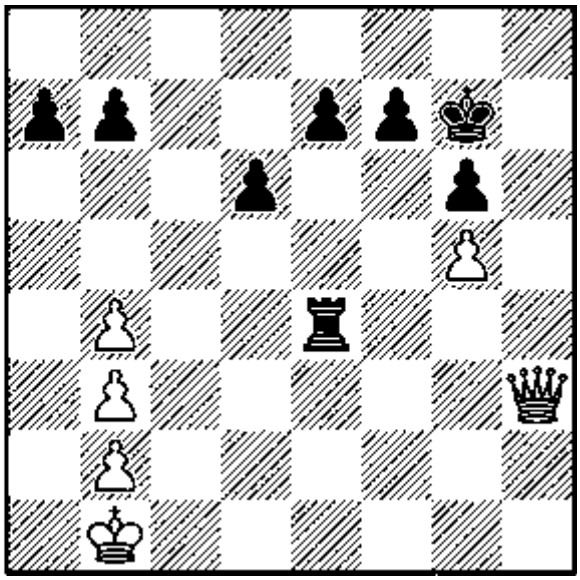
1 Rf8+?? K×f8 2 a8Q+ Ke7 3 Qb7+

Draw. Black should just bring his rook to g4, f5 or e5.

Martín González – Pétursson
Biel izt 1985

13-47

W?



White could win comfortably after 1 b5!, attacking the queenside pawns with his queen.

1 Qf3?? Re1+! 2 Kc2 b5! 3 Qb7 Re5=

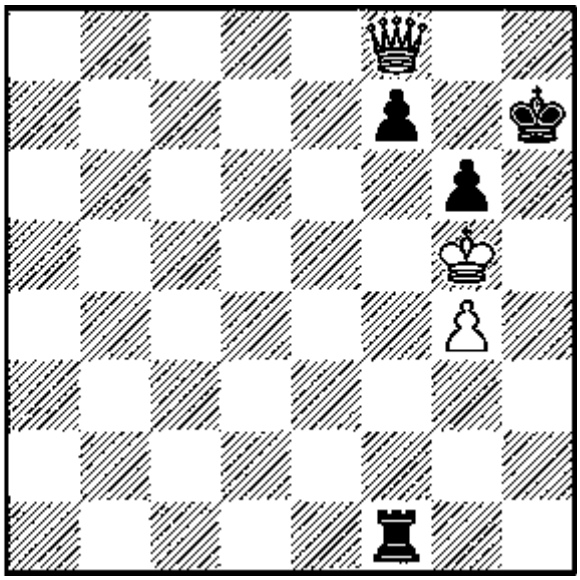
The rook has protected all the important pawns, and an indestructible fortress is created.

4 Q×a7 Kf8 5 Qb8+ Kg7 6 Qc7 Kf8 7 Qd8+ Kg7 8 Qe8 R×g5 9 Q×e7 Rf5 10 Q×d6 Kg8 11 Kd3 Draw.

Exercises

13-48

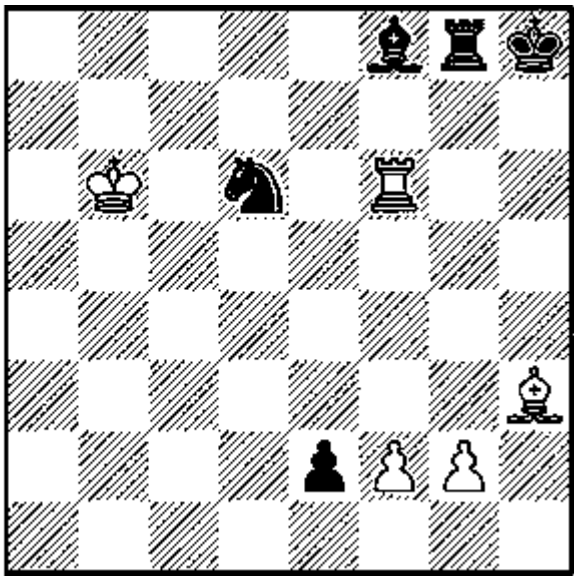
13/3
?



Evaluate this position:
(1)with White to move; (2) with Black to move.

13-49

13/4
W?/Play



Chapter 14

Other Material Relations

In this chapter we shall discuss various types of endgames with non-standard material relations. We will be brief because their consequent theory is not yet fully developed. Often one can find a variety (rich or poor) of endgame studies and examples from practical play which are not systematized nor coordinated well enough. And even when the theory of a certain type of ending is developed, there is no sense in going deeply into it because the analyses are mostly complicated and perplexing, while the probability of their practical use is utterly unlikely.

Two Extra Pieces

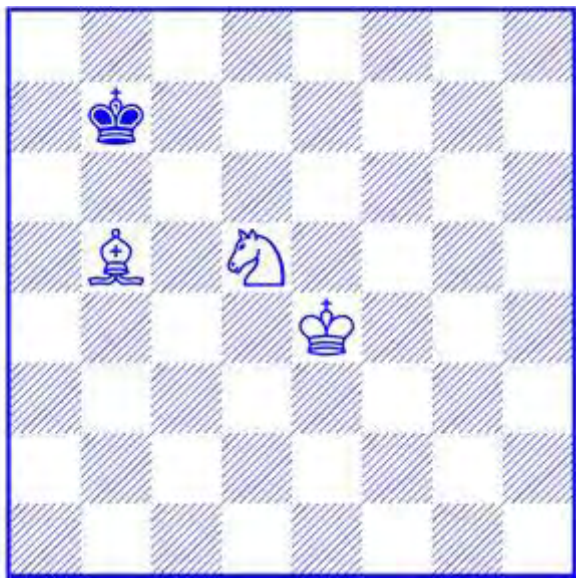
Checkmating with Bishop and Knight

I was unsure whether this subject should be included in the book, because the mating technique with a bishop and a knight against a lone king is explained in every tutorial for beginners. However, my experience as a chess trainer finally put an end to these doubts because I have seen how many chessplayers, including very strong ones, either missed learning this technique at an appropriate time or had already forgotten it.

Therefore they risk presenting their opponents with a half-point (and this has happened more than once), particularly under modern time controls when checkmating must often be performed in severe time trouble.

A king can be checkmated only in a corner of the bishop's color. The plan for the stronger side is obvious: first the enemy king is driven to an edge (this stage is simple but the king naturally aims to reach a safe corner). Thereafter the king is forced to a "proper" corner where mate is possible.

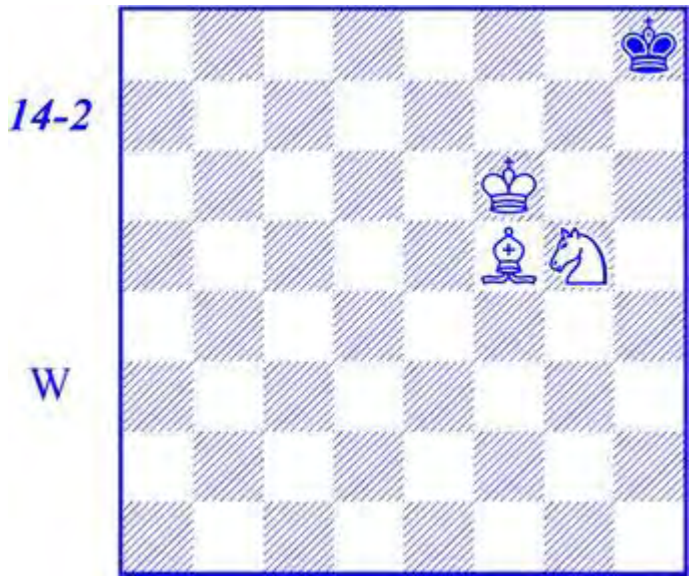
14-1



This is the type of position that the stronger side aims for. Notice that White's pieces have built ***a barrier*** that holds the black king in the corner. What remains is only to drive the king into the corner.

1 Ke5 Kc8 2 Ke6 Kd8 3 Kd6 Kc8 4 Ke7 Kb7 5 Kd7 Kb8 6 Ba6! Ka7 7 Bc8 Kb8 8 Kd8 Ka7 9 Kc7 Ka8 10 Ne7 Ka7 11 Nc6+ Ka8 12 Bb7#.

And this is how the king is driven from one corner to the other.



1 Nf7+ Kg8 2 Be4 Kf8 3 Bh7 Ke8 4 Ne5 Kd8

4…Kf8 makes White's task easier: 5 Nd7+ Ke8 6 Ke6 Kd8 7 Kd6 Ke8 8 Bg6+ Kd8 9 Nc5 Kc8 10 Be8 Kd8 11 Bb5 Kc8 12 Bd7+ Kb8 13 Kc6, etc.

5 Ke6 Kc7

The king has broken loose from the edge of the board, but only for a while. White, with two accurate moves, creates a barrier, and locks the king in the corner.

6 Nd7! Kc6 7 Bd3! Kc7 8 Bb5 Kb7 (8…Kd8 9 Nf6 Kc7 10 Nd5+) **9 Kd6 Kc8 10 Nf6** (10 Nc5!? Kd8 11 Nb7+ Kc8 12 Kc6) **10…Kd8 11 Nd5**, and we have come to the position of the previous diagram.

Checkmating with Two Knights

Driving the king to the edge of the board is an easy task. Alas, you can only stalemate it thereafter, not checkmate, but three knights will win against a single knight.

However ***if the defender has a pawn, and this pawn is not too advanced, and it is blocked with one of the knights, an eventual win is quite possible***, although the winning process is very difficult; it may require dozens of precise moves.

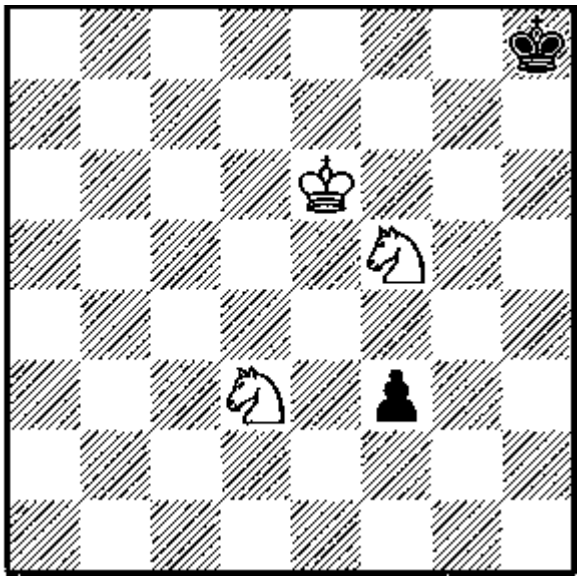
As the Russian study composer Troitsky proved in the beginning of the 20th century, a knight together with a king can drive the solitary king either to a corner or towards the "spare" knight (the one that is blocking the pawn). Thereafter, the spare knight joins the hunt, and mate is delivered with its help.

In the next diagram, play begins: **1 Nf2! Kg8 2 Ke7 Kh7** (2…Kh8? 3 Kf7 Kh7 4 Ne4 f2 5 Nf6+ Kh8 6 Nh4 f1Q 7 Ng6#) **3 Kf7 Kh8 4 Kg6! Kg8 5 Ng7!**

Troitsky's standard maneuver that enables the knight's transfer to e6, where this piece will be more dangerous for the black king.

A. Troitsky

14-3



W

5…Kf8 6 Kf6 Kg8 7 Ne6! Kh7 8 Kg5! Kg8 (8…Kh8 9 Kg6 Kg8 10 Ng4 f2 11 Nf6+ Kh8 12 Ng5 f1Q 13 Nf7#) **9 Kg6 Kh8 11 Kf7! Kh7 12 Ng4! f2 13 Nf8+ Kh8 14 Nf6 f1Q 15 Ng6#**

The pawn was very far advanced; therefore, White managed to deliver checkmate because the black monarch was already locked in a corner close to f2-knight. If the king had more freedom it would run to a8, and White's knight cannot reach that corner in time.

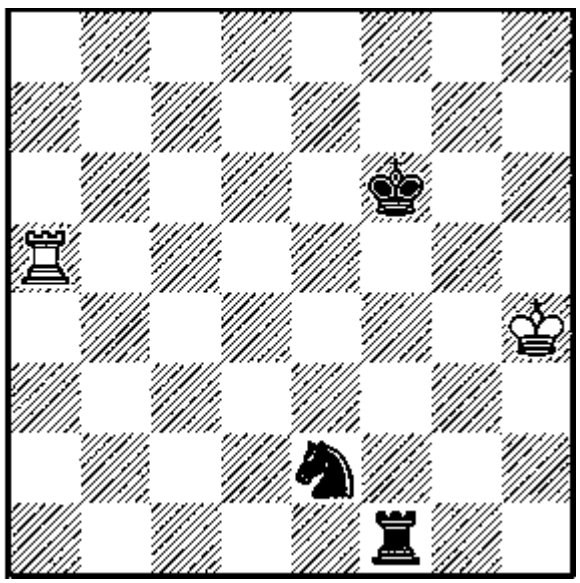
Rook and Knight vs. Rook

A draw with a rook against a rook and a knight is not a difficult procedure. Even when your king is confined to the edge of the board, you can usually slip away from mating threats (sometimes with the help of stalemate).

The following endgame is taken from a practical play; it illustrates various defensive resources (alas, not exploited by White) and the dangers that can punish the careless defender.

J. Polgar – Kasparov
Dos Hermanas 1996

14-4



W?

1 Ra8?

Why does Polgar not flee from the edge with her king? 1 Kg4! Rf4+ 2 Kh3 △ 3 Kg2= suggests itself.

1…Rg1! 2 Rf8+ Ke5 3 Re8+ Kf4

The knight is taboo in view of mate.

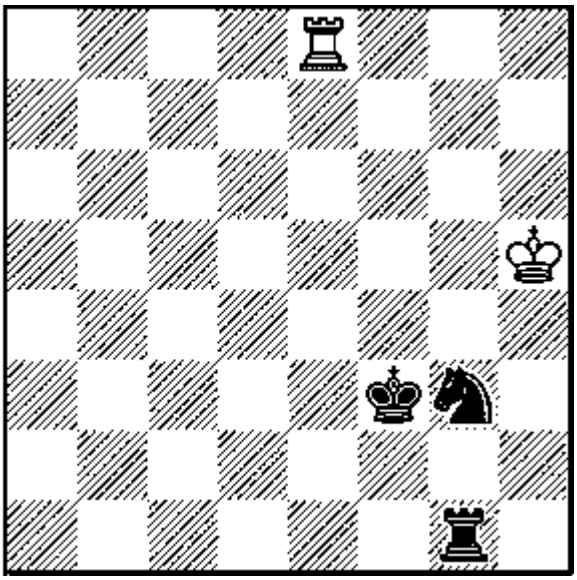
4 Rf8+ Ke4 5 Re8+ Kf3 6 Kh5

She could try playing for a stalemate: 6 Rf8+!? Nf4 7 Rg8!. For example, 7…Rh1+ 8 Kg5 Rg1+

9 Kh4! Ng6+ 10 Kh5 Kf4! (the only method of holding the white king on the edge) 11 Rg7 Kf5 12 Rf7+, pushing the black king somewhat away and thereby reducing the danger of a mating attack.

6…Ng3+

14-5



W

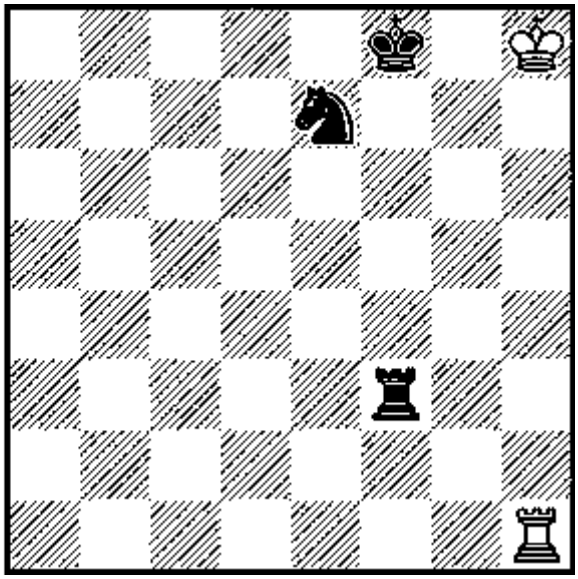
7 Kh6?!

Stronger was 7 Kg6! Ne4+ 8 Kh6 (unfortunately, in view of knight forks, other squares are not available). From e4, the knight cannot protect the king from the inevitable 9 Rf8+.

7…Nf5+ 8 Kh7 Kf4 9 Rb8 Rg7+ 10 Kh8 Rd7 11 Re8

The king in the corner is in real danger. A line suggested by Nunn illustrates this: 11 Rf8 Kg5 12 Ra8 Kg6 13 Rg8+ Kh6 14 Rg1 Rd8+ 15 Rg8 Rd3 (15…Rd2 is less precise in view of 16 Rg2!) 16 Rg1 Rf3 17 Rg4 Ne7 18 Rh4+ Kg6 19 Rh6+ Kf7 20 Rh7+ Kf8 21 Rh1

14-6

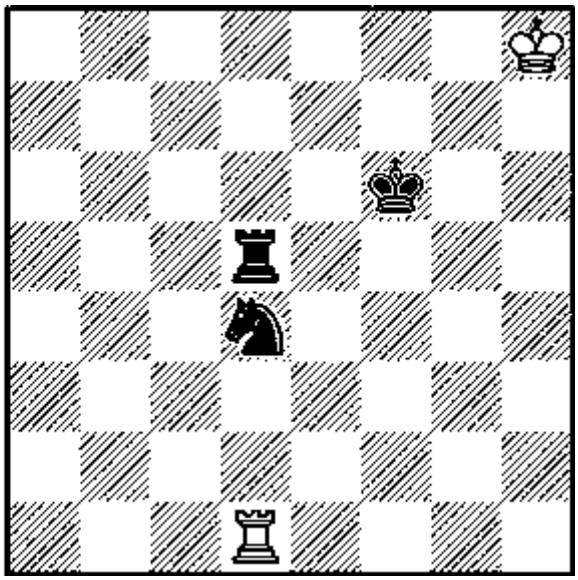


B?

21…Ng8 22 Kh7 Kf7 23 Kh8 Nf6–+. Notice how the final construction looks: with the knight on f6, White cannot avoid mate, while a rook sacrifice for the sake of a stalemate cannot be arranged.

11…Kg5 12 Re6 Nd4 13 Re1 Kf6 14 Rd1?! (14 Rf1+ Nf5 15 Kg8) **14…Rd5!**

14-7



W?

15 Ra1??

The decisive error! 15 Rf1+! Nf5 16 Rf2 (16 Kg8) 16…Rd4 17 Kg8!= was still good enough for a draw.

15…Ne6!–+ **16 Ra6 Kf7 17 Ra7+ Kg6 18 Ra8 Rd7**

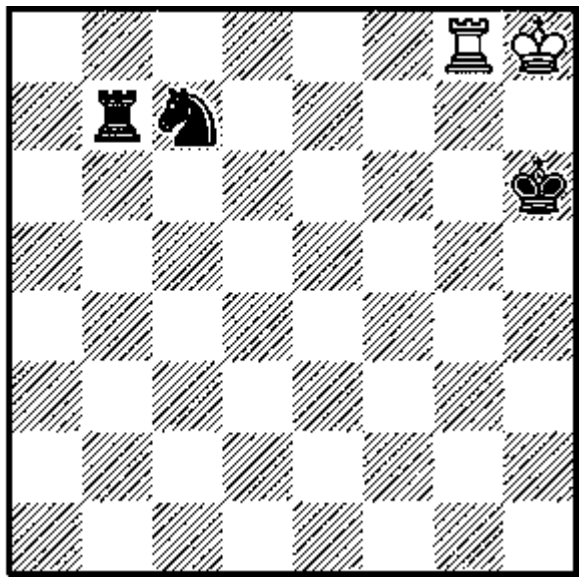
Here and later on, Kasparov fails to find the proper grouping for his pieces (similar to that from the notes to the 11th move): 18…Rd6! 19 Kg8 Ng5 20 Kf8 Re6 21 Kg8 Nh7 22 Rb8 Re7 followed by 23…Nf6+. However his position remains winning, as the white king cannot escape from the corner.

19 Rb8 Rc7 20 Kg8 Rc5 21 Ra8 Rb5 22 Kh8 Rb7 (22…Rb6) **23 Rc8 Nc7?!**

23…Rb6!–+ △ …Ng5, …Re6, …Nh7-f6.

24 Rg8+ Kh6

14-8



W

25 Rg1?

This error makes Black's task easier. 25 Rf8!? would have been more tenacious. White sets a trap (25…Nd5? 26 Rf6+!) and waits as to whether Black finds the winning plan (25…Rb6!)

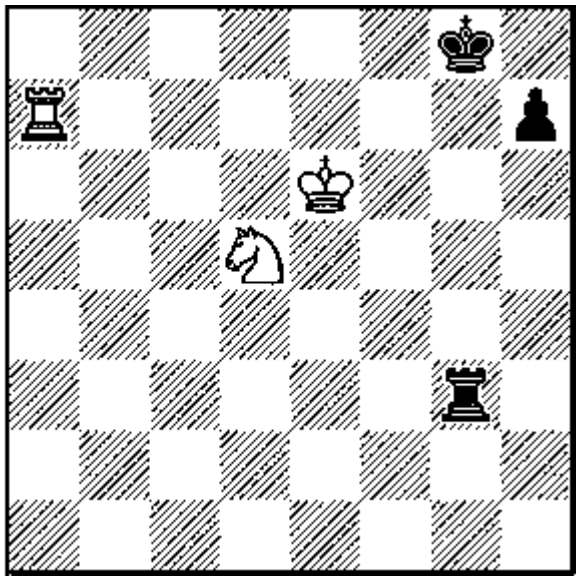
25…Rb8+ 26 Rg8 Ne8

White resigned on account of 27 Rf8 Kg6 28 Rg8+ Kf7–+.

Tragicomedies

Yudovich (jr.) – Bebchuk
Moscow ch 1964

14-9



B

Black resigned without reason, for he could easily parry any mating threats: **1…Kf8! 2 Rf7+** (2 Nf6 Re3+) **2…Ke8 3 R×h7 Rg6+ 4 Nf6+ Kd8**=.

Rook and Bishop vs. Rook

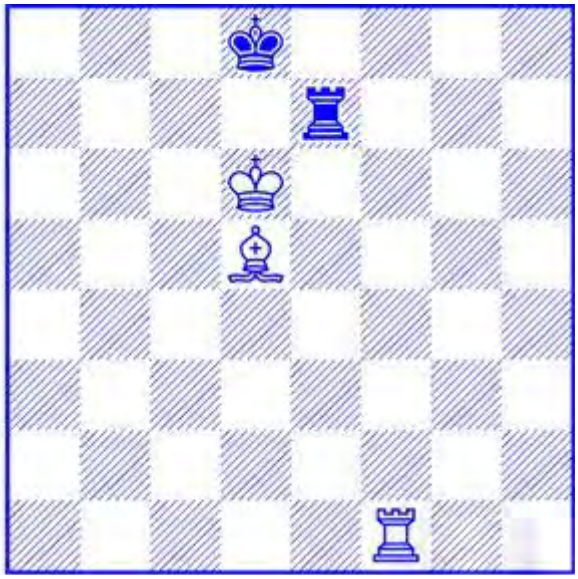
Without Pawns

An illustration of the dangers fatal to the defender when his king is pressed to the edge of the board is the following position that was known as early as the 18th century.

Philidor, 1749

14-10

S



W

1 Rf8+! Re8 2 Rf7 (△ 3 Ra7) **2…Re2!**

2…Kc8 loses rapidly: 3 Ra7 Rd8+ 4 Kc6 Kb8 5 Rb7+ Ka8 6 Rb1 Ka7 7 Kc7.

3 Rh7!⊙

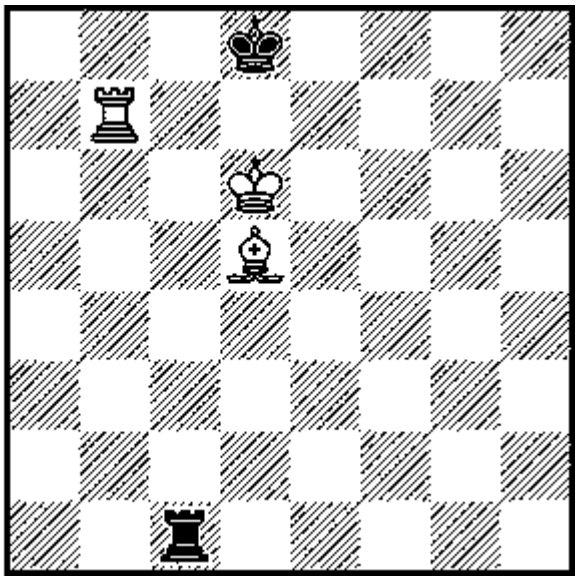
An important waiting move. The black rook must leave the second rank where it stands best. The following line proves that the third rank is worse for the rook: 3…Re3 4 Rd7+ Ke8 (4…Kc8 5 Ra7) 5 Ra7 Kf8 6 Rf7+ Ke8 7 Rf4 (8 Bc6+ is threatened) 7…Kd8 (7…Rd3 8 Rg4) 8 Be4! (the point – Black has no check along the d-file) 8…Ke8 9 Bc6+.

3…Re1 4 Rb7

These alternate threats from both wings are typical for this sort of position. If 4…Kc8, 5 Rb2 Rd1 6 Rh2 Kb8 7 Ra2 is decisive.

4…Rc1

14-11



W?

5 Bb3!

The key move! If the black rook were standing on the second rank, a check from d2 could follow, while now Black must place his rook on the unfavorable third rank.

5…Rc3

If 5…Kc8, then 6 Rb4 Kd8 7 Rh4 Re1 (7…Kc8 8 Bd5) 8 Ba4 (there is no saving check along the d-file again) 8…Kc8 9 Bc6 Rd1+ 10 Bd5 Kb8 11 Ra4+–.

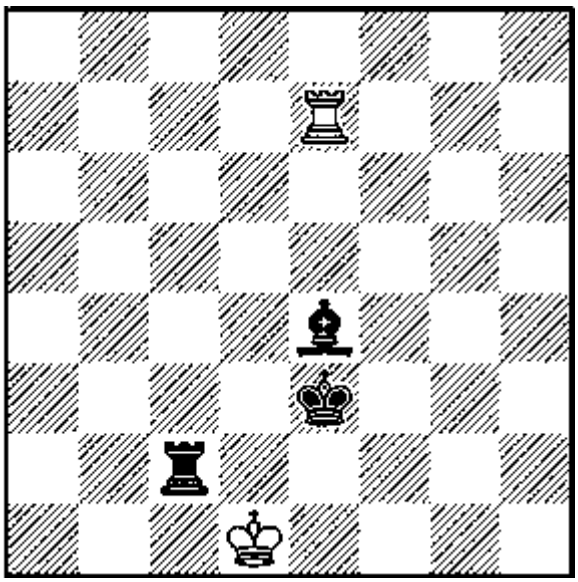
6 Be6 Rd3+ 7 Bd5 Rc3 8 Rd7+ Kc8 (8…Ke8 9 Rg7) **9 Rh7 Kb8 10 Rb7+ Kc8 11 Rb4 Kd8 12 Bc4! Kc8 13 Be6+** and mate in two.

Not all positions with the king on the edge are of course lost. But the line between a draw and a loss is quite narrow; it can be easily crossed.

van der Weide – Marovic

Amsterdam 1967

14-12

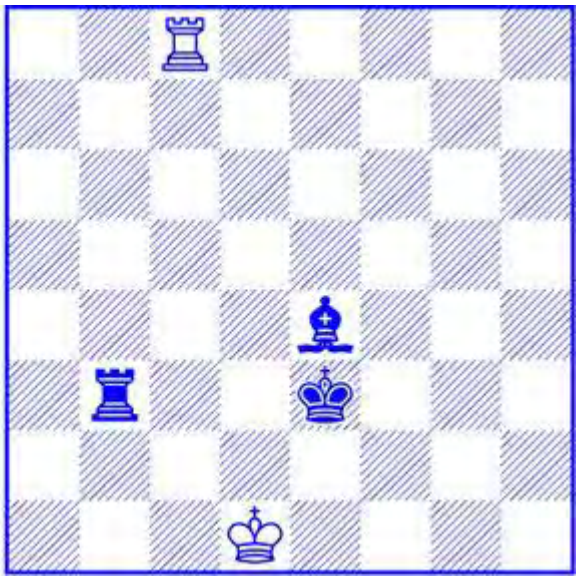


B

Black would instantly resolve the struggle's outcome by retreating the rook along the c-file: 1…Rc8 2 Re5 Rd8+ and 3…Rb8. The move made changes the evaluation of the position.

1…Rb2? 2 Rc7 Rb3 3 Rc8

14-13



B

The defensive scheme when the kings are not on the same file, as in Philidor's position, but on neighboring files, was examined in the first half of the 19th century by József Szen. You should direct your attention to it when your king is cut off along a rank or file on the edge.

It is useful to know that the position is drawn if the pieces are moved one or two files to the right, while moving them further to the left loses because of they are too near the edge of the board…

3…Rb7 4 Rc5

Safer is 4 Rc3+! Bd3 5 Rc8, and if 5…Rh7, then 6 Kc1.

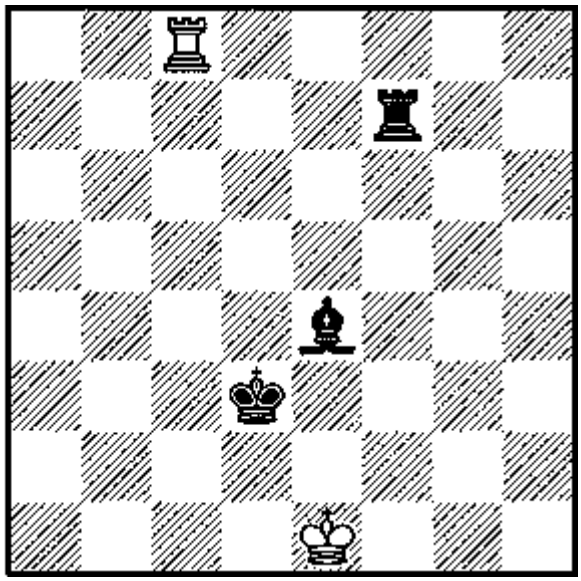
4…Kd3 5 Ke1?!

Not there! After 5 Kc1 it is not obvious how Black is going to make any progress.

5…Rf7 6 Rc8?

Only 6 Ra5(b5)! avoids defeat.

14-14



B?

Dražen Marovic find the only road to victory.

6…Bg2!! 7 Rd8+ Ke3 8 Re8+ Be4

The matter has been reduced to Philidor's position.

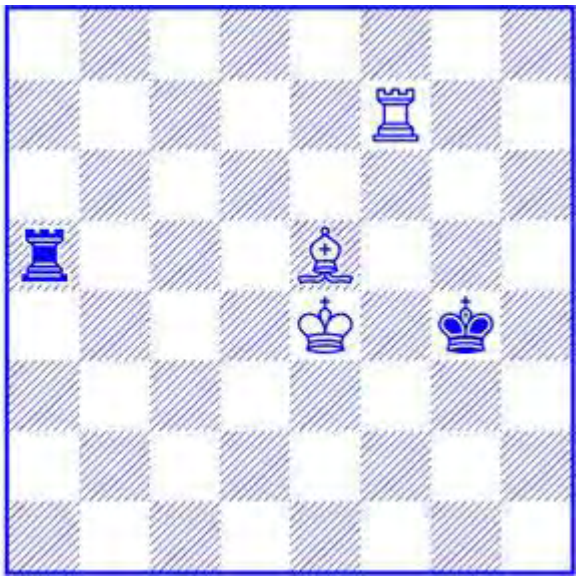
9 Rg8 Rc7 10 Rd8 Rc1+ 11 Rd1 Rc2 12 Rd8 (somewhat more stubborn, as we know, is 12 Rd7) **12…Rg2 13 Rf8 Bg6! 14 Rf6 Bd3 15 Re6+ Be4 16 Rf6 Re2+ 17 Kf1 Rc2 18 Kg1 Rg2+ 19 Kf1 Rg5 20 Ke1 Bf5** White resigned.

In a practical game one can usually avoid danger by means of orientation at the "Cochrane position" or by using "a defense along the seventh rank."

Both these techniques can be seen from the following instructive example.

Timman – Lutz
Wijk aan Zee 1995

14-15



B

1…Ra4+ 2 Bd4 Kg5 3 Rg7+ Kh4 (rather than 3…Kh5? 4 Kf5)

This is called the Cochrane position – the safest defensive method when the king is already pressed to the edge. The rook pins the bishop and does not allow the hostile king to come closer. If 4 Rd7 (△ 5 Kf4), then 4…Kg4. In case of the waiting attempt 4 Rg8, Black follows the same policy with 4…Rb4.

4 Ke5 Kh3!

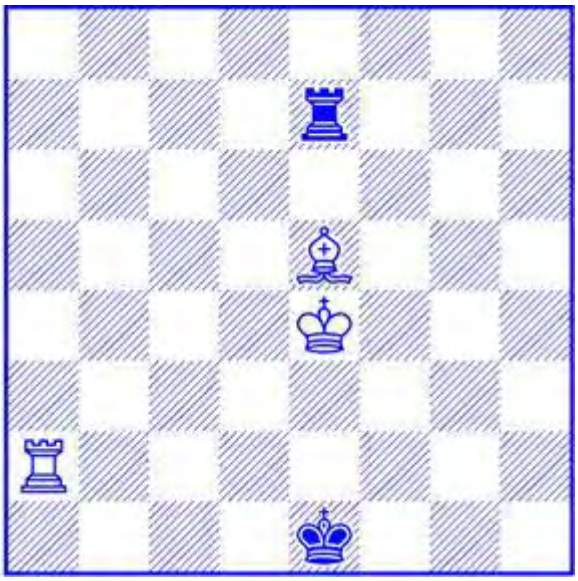
The king escapes from a bishop check in advance, and moves in the opposite direction from the white king. If White had played 4 Ke3, the reply would have been 4…Kh5!.

5 Rg1 Rb4 6 Be3 Rg4!

This is the point! In order to bring his king closer, White had to move his bishop away, and Black takes advantage of this circumstance immediately. By offering the rook exchange, he releases his king from the edge.

7 Ra1 Kg2 8 Bf4 Rg8 9 Ra2+ Kf3 10 Ra3+ Ke2 11 Ke4 Re8+ 12 Be5 Re7 13 Ra2+ Ke1!

14-16



W

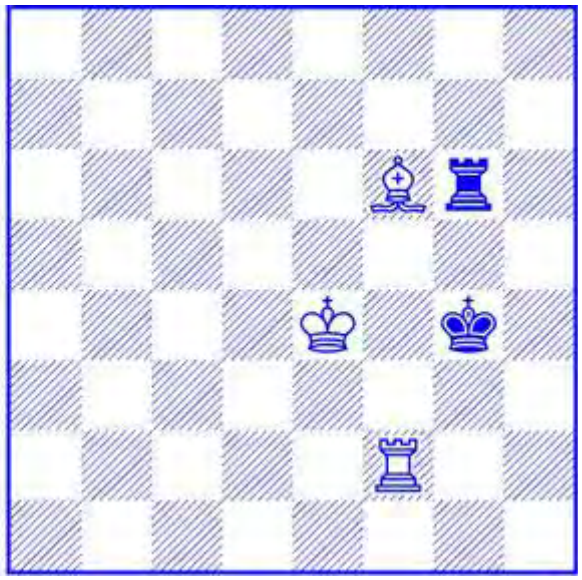
The Cochrane position has arisen again only rotated by 90 degrees.

14 Kd4 Kf1! 15 Bf4 Re2! 16 Ra8 Re7 17 Kd3 Kg2 18 Rf8 Re6 19 Rf7 Re8 20 Be3 Ra8 21 Bc5 Ra4 22 Ke3 Rg4

Black changes his defensive setup. After 22…Kg3!? 23 Rg7+ Kh4 24 Bd4 Kh5!, he could reach the Cochrane position for the third time.

23 Bd6 Rg6 24 Rf2+ Kh3 25 Be5 Kg4 26 Ke4 Kh5 27 Bf6 Kg4

14-17



W

We are observing “the defense along the seventh rank” that prevents pressing the king to the edge of the board. The rook is placed two squares away from the king, so that after 28 Rg2+ Kh5, White has no time for 29 Kf5. It may seem that the waiting move 28 Rf1 puts Black in zugzwang, but here a stalemate bails him out: 28…Kh5 29 Kf5 Rg5+! (this is why this technique works only on the seventh rank or the knight file). The rook cannot be captured, while after 30 Ke6 Rg2 31 Rf4 Kg6 32 Rh4 Re2+ 33 Be5 Rg2 34 Rh8 Rg4, the defense along the seventh rank is recreated.

28 Rf4+ Kg3 29 Ke3 Kh3 (29…Rg8) **30 Rf5 Rg3+** (30…Kg4) **31 Kf2 Rg2+ 32 Kf1 Rc2**

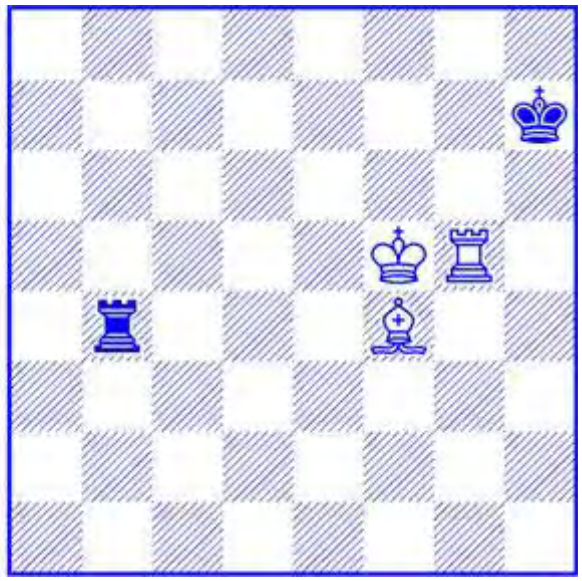
A retreat of the rook to g6, preparing 33…Kg4 or 33…Kg3, was simpler.

33 Rg5 Rc4 34 Be5 Kh4 35 Rg8 Re4 (35…Rg4!) **36 Bg3+ Kh5 37 Kf2 Ra4?!**

After 37…Rg4!, Timman would have probably offered a draw because the black king leaves the edge.

38 Kf3 Kh6 39 Be5 Rb4 40 Bf4+ Kh7 41 Rg5 Ra4 42 Kg4 Rb4 43 Kf5

14-18



B

After a few nonchalant moves Black’s position has become suspect. However, as Lutz pointed out, a draw could be still reached by means of 43…Rb1 44 Be5 Rf1+ or 43…Rb6 44 Be5 Rg6! 45 Rh5+ Rh6 46 Rg5 Rg6!=.

43…Rb5+?

A decisive threat that caused … an immediate agreement to a draw! The point is that the last pawn had been captured 53 moves ago, and “the rule of 50 moves” was duly applied.

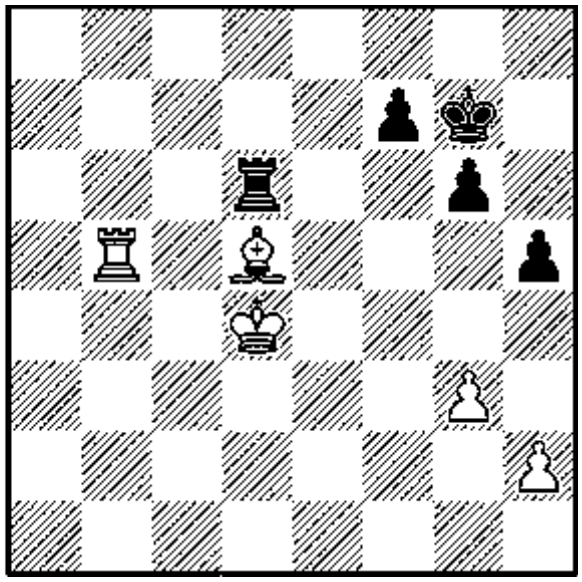
After 44 Be5 Rb6 (44…Ra5 45 Rh5+ Kg8 46 Kg6; 44…Rb7 45 Rh5+ Kg8 46 Rh8+ Kf7 47 Rh7+; 44…Kh6 45 Rg8 Rb7 46 Rg1) 45 Rg7+ Kh6 46 Rg8 Kh5, the Philidor position, rotated by 90 degrees, could have arisen. The winning procedure is already known: 47 Rg2 Rb4 48 Rg1! (zugzwang, the rook is forced away from the b-file) etc.

With Pawns

Let us analyze a case with an extra bishop that has occurred a number of times in tournament practice.

Suba – D. Gurevich
Eksjo 1982

14-19
$
W



White must be accurate in view of the reduced material on the board. By the way, we should emphasize that he may exchange rooks, although his bishop and the h8-square are of different colors.

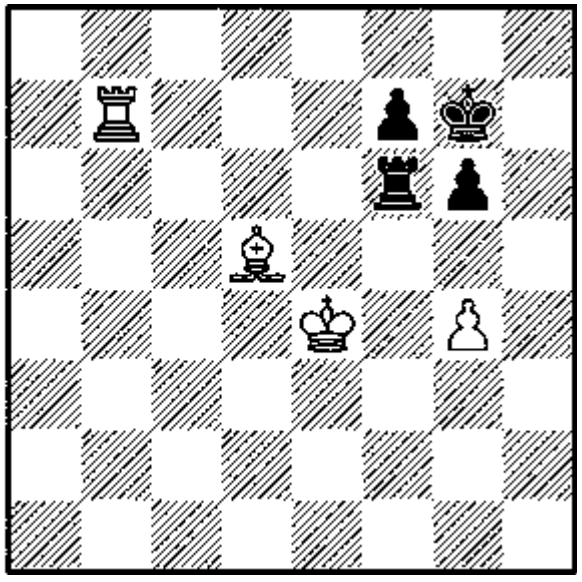
It is obvious that he should attack the f7-pawn, but from which direction – along the file or along the rank?

The game continued 1 Rb3 Ra6 2 Rf3 Ra7 3 Rf2 Rd7 4 Kc5 Ra7 5 Kc6 f5 (against 5…Re7, White had probably planned 6 Kd6 Ra7 7 Ra2, forcing the exchange of rooks) 6 Kd6 Kf6 7 Re2. The forced advance of the f-pawn had weakened Black's position, and White gradually exploited his advantage.

As Suba stated, the occupation of the seventh rank could be an even more convincing winning method.

1 Rb7 Rf6 2 h3 Rf1 3 Ke4 Rf6 4 g4 hg 5 hg

14-20
B



5…Rf1

If 5…g5!?, Ch. Lutz suggests 6 Ke5 Rf4 7 Be6 Rf6 8 Bf5 Ra6 9 Rb5! Rc6 (9…Ra4 10 Be4 Rc4 11 Kf5 Rd4 12 Bb1; 9…Kh6 10 Rc5 △ 11 Be4; 9…Rf6 10 Rc5 Rb6 11 Be4 △ 12 Rc6) 10 Be4 Rf6

11 Kd4 Kh6 12 Rf5 Rd6+ 13 Bd5 Kg6 14 Kc5 Rd7 15 Kc6 Re7 16 Bb3 Ra7 17 Bc4 Re7 18 Bd5 Ra7 19 Kd6⊙ Ra6+ 20 Kd7 Ra7+ 21 Kd8⊙ f6 (White has finally forced this weakening) 22 Be4+– etc.

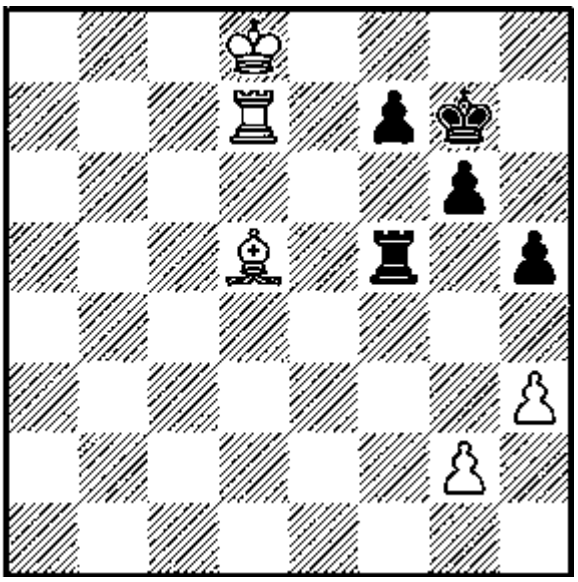
6 Bc4 Rf6 7 g5 Rf5 8 R×f7+! R×f7 9 B×f7 K×f7 10 Kd5+–.

Tragicomedies

Gufeld – Rahman
Calcutta 1994

14-21

W



1 g4?

Curiously enough, precisely this position (with reversed colors) happened in Gufeld's earlier game versus Honfi (Kislovodsk 1968). In that game Gufeld found the correct idea; he realized that the advance g2-g4 is premature and chose another plan – a rook transfer to the f-file.

That game continued 1 Ke7 Re5+ 2 Kd6 Rf5 3 Ra7 Rf6+ 4 Kc5 Rf2 5 Ra2 (5 Ra3 Kh6 6 Rf3? R×g2) 5…Rf1 6 Ra3 Re1 (6…Kh6 7 Rf3 R×f3 8 B×f3 Kg5 9 Bd5 f5 10 Bf7 Kf4 11 B×g6 Kg3 12 B×f5 K×g2 13 Kd5 Kg3 14 Ke5 Kh4 15 Kf6+–) 7 Kd6 Re2 8 Rf3 and Black, like in the Suba-Gurevich endgame, had to push his f-pawn; gradually, this fact caused his loss. After 25 years, Gufeld had forgotten his conclusions drawn during that earlier game; he pushed his g-pawn prematurely and missed a win.

The plan with g2-g4 is nevertheless good, only White should bring his king back beforehand. For example, 3 Rc7 (instead of 3 Ra7) 3…Rf6+ 4 Ke5 Rf5+ 5 Ke4 Rf2 6 Ke3 Rf5 7 Bc4! (from here the bishop denies the black rook the important f1-square) 7…Kf8 (7…Re5+ 8 Kd4 Rf5 9 Ke4 Rf2 10 g4) 8 g4 hg 9 hg Rf6 (9…Re5+ does not help, either: 10 Kd4 Re7 11 R×e7 K×e7 12 Ke5 f6+ 13 Kd5 Kf7 14 Kd6+ and 15 Ke6) 10 Ke4 (the threat is 11 g5 and 12 R×f7+) 10…g5 11 Ke5 Rf4 12 Bd3! R×g4 13 Kf6+– (the final part of this line was suggested by Yanvarev).

In Gufeld's opinion, the move 1 g3?! wins even more rapidly because of zugzwang: if 1…Rf2, then 2 Ke8 Re2+ 3 Re7+–. Neither 1…Kf8 2 g4 hg 3 hg Rf4 4 g5 Rf5 5 R×f7+ R×f7 6 B×f7, nor 1…Kg8 2 g4 hg 3 hg Rf4 4 R×f7! R×f7 5 Ke8+– helps. However, he did not take into consideration the strongest reply, 1…Rg5!, which makes White's task considerably more difficult: 2 R×f7+ Kh6 3 Be6 R×g3 4 Ke7 (4 h4 Rd3+ 5 Ke7 Rd4=) 4…Kg5.

1…hg 2 hg Rf4 3 g5

It seems that a general exchange on f7 is inevitable. In reality, Black has two possibilities to avoid it:

3…Rg4!=

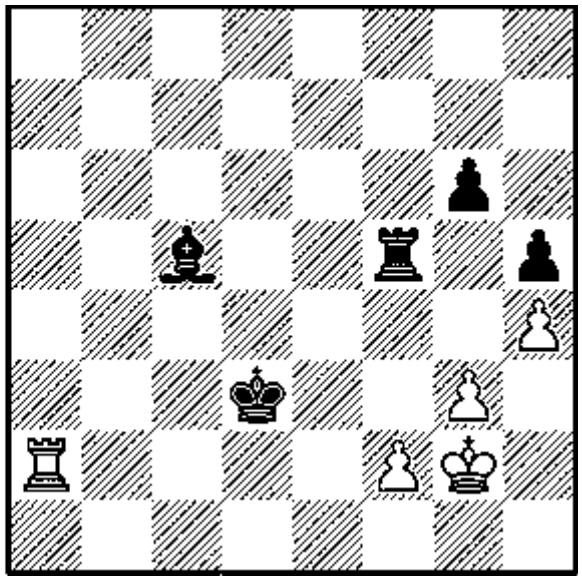
White's last pawn must die. Another good method was 3…Rf5 4 R×f7+ Kh8! 5 R×f5 gf 6 Ke7 Kg7 7 Bf7 f4 8 Bh5 f3=.

Mark Tseitlin – Finkel

Beersheba 1996

14-22

W?



In this position, the characteristic difference (in comparison with those we have seen previously) is the position of the black h-pawn – here it is far less favorable. First, Black does not have the familiar plan with g6-g5-g4 followed by a transition to a pawn endgame. Second, in case of an exchange of rooks, White will be able to exchange a pair of pawns without any problem, and Black's remaining h-pawn will be quite useless against the king in the safe corner h1.

White could achieve a draw by playing 1 Kg1!, for example 1…Bd4 2 Kg2 Rf6 3 Kg1 Rb6 4 Kg2 Rb2 5 R×b2 B×b2 6 g4 hg 7 Kg3 Bc1 8 K×g4 Bh6 9 f4 and 10 h5= (Ch. Lutz).

1 Kf1?? B×f2!–+

All of a sudden, it becomes obvious that 2 R×f2 is bad in view of 2…Ke3 3 R×f5 gf 4 Kg2 Ke2 ⊙.

2 Kg2 Bb6 3 Rb2 Bd4 4 Ra2 Ke4 5 Re2+ Be3 6 Ra2 Rd5 7 Ra4+ Kf5 8 Kf3 Bd4 9 Ra3 Be5 White resigned.

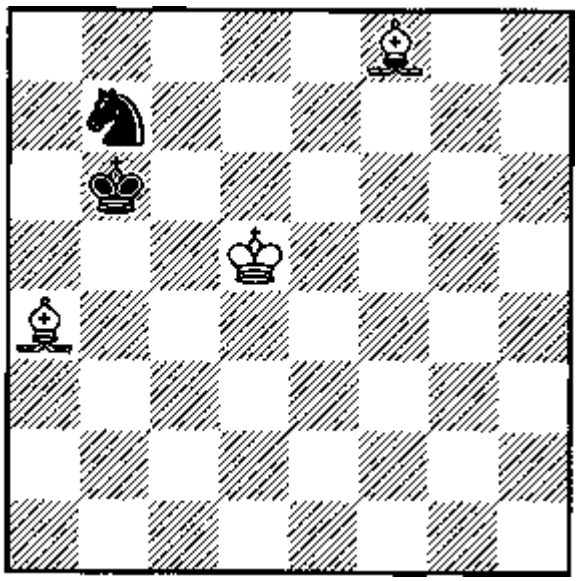
An Extra Bishop or Knight with Queens or Minor Pieces

Let us first discuss positions without pawns.

A bishop and a knight can win against a knight only in exceptional cases, and all the more so against a bishop.

But two bishops can practically always cope with a knight.

14-23



Kling and Horwitz (1851) thought that this position was drawn. As a matter of fact, the knight is

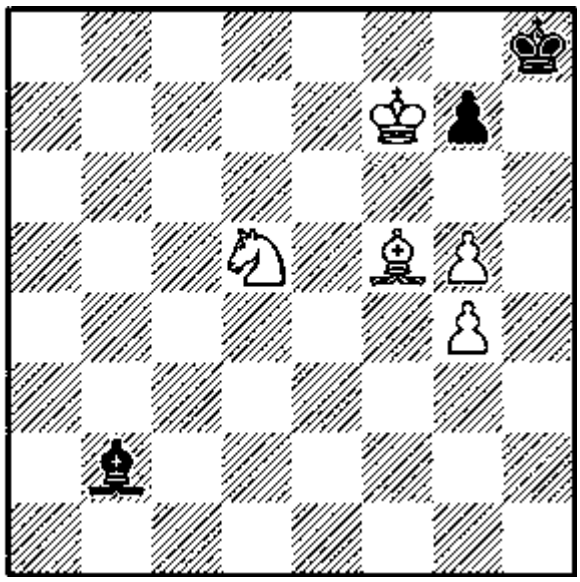
quite favorably placed on b7 for defensive purposes. Only in 1983 did computer analysis show that this defensive setup could be destroyed without permitting its restoration in another corner. If both sides play this endgame perfectly, the winning process lasts more than 50 moves; it is too complicated to reproduce it here.

A queen and a minor piece cannot, generally speaking, win against a queen. But exceptions are not so rare with this material: an attack against the king can lead to mate or to a win of the queen.

From the wide variety of positions with pawns, I would like to distinguish those with bishops of opposite colors. It turns out that the drawish tendencies typical in "pure" cases of such bishops (i.e., with bishops of opposite color and no other pieces), are valid here too, helping the weaker side to survive even when a piece down. Two examples of this sort follow.

A. Sokolov – Yusupov
Riga cmf (7) 1986*

14-24
$



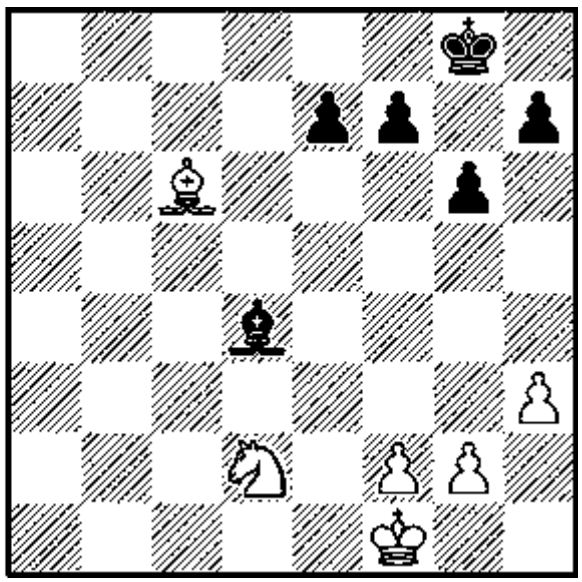
W

White has no win despite his extra piece and pawn. The black king cannot be driven away from the corner (Ng6+ will be met with …Kh7, and Nf7+ with …Kg8). The attempt to bring the bishop to g8 to create a mating net is easily parried.

1 Nf6 Bc1! (1…Bd4? 2 Bh7) **2 Nh5** (2 Bh7 gf 3 g6 Bh6=) **2…Bb2 3 Nf4** (threatening 4 Ng6+ Kh7 5 Nf8+ Kh8 6 Bh7) **3…Ba3!** etc.

Yachmennik – Belov
Smolensk 1989

14-25
$



B

1…h5 2 Ke2 Kg7 3 f3 e6

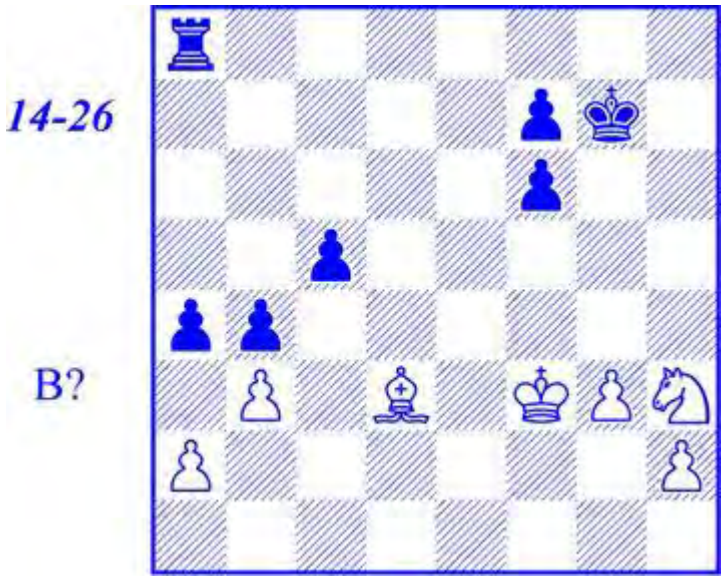
To achieve success, White must attack the f7-pawn with two pieces, but this is very difficult to do against a precise defense. All his attempts were in vain; the game ended in a draw.

Rook vs. Two Minor Pieces

In the middlegame, two minor pieces are usually much stronger than a rook. In an endgame this advantage is much less significant; sometimes a rook can even gain the upper hand. The reason is that pawn chains in the middlegame restrict the rook's mobility. In an endgame, on the contrary, the rook enjoys full mobility.

A rook is especially dangerous when it attacks pawns (usually placed along the seventh rank) that cannot be protected by the king and cannot be defended comfortably with the pieces; another case of a dangerous rook is when it supports a distant passed pawn.

Beliavsky – Dolmatov
USSR ch, Minsk 1979



After the natural-looking 1…Rh8 2 Nf2! ab (2…R×h2 3 ba) 3 ab R×h2 4 Ne4, the position would remain static; it is usually favorable for the side with two pieces. White would then have had excellent winning chances.

Dolmatov found an amazing resource.

1…c4!! 2 B×c4 (if 2 bc, then 2…Rb8!?) **2…Rc8!**

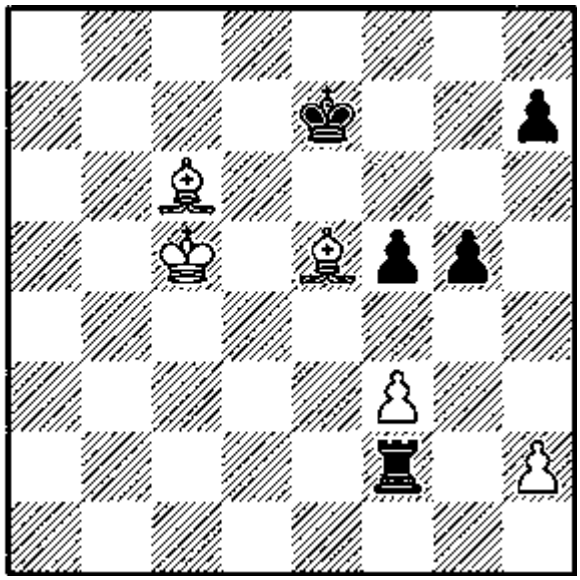
The threat 3…R×c4! 4 bc b3 5 ab a3 forces White to remove his bishop from c4.

3 Bd3 a3!

White must now beware of both 4…Rc1 △ 5…Ra1 and 4…Rc3 △ 5…R×b3. Black has seized the initiative.

Miles – Kindermann
Bath 1983

14-27



B

The rook, fighting inside the hostile camp, is again stronger than two minor pieces.

1…Ke6

Black rejected the immediate 1…f4!?, probably in view of 2 Kd4!? R×h2 3 Ke4 △ 4 Kf5.

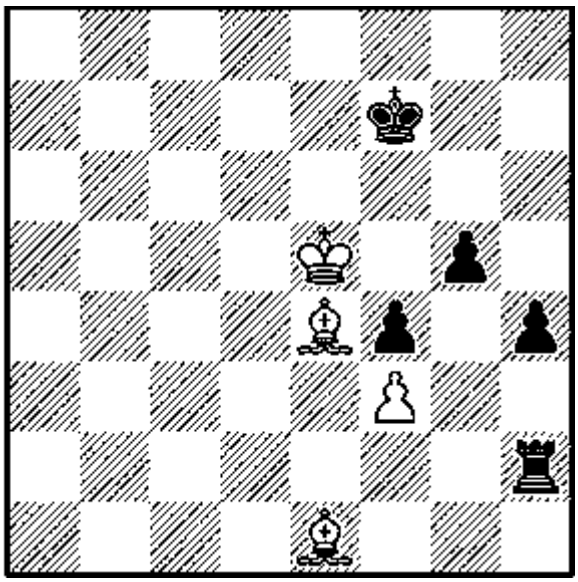
2 Bc3?!

Miles gives the h2-pawn away, pinning his hopes on the cooperation of his bishops and his centralized king, but his wishes will not come true. Perhaps he should have preferred 2 Bc7. Then 2…Rc2+?! is not precise: 3 Kb6 h6 4 Be8!? f4 5 h3 Rh2 6 Bh5 or 3…f4 4 Bd8! h6 5 h3 Rh2 6 Kc7. The immediate 2…f4! is stronger. Now 3 h4? loses to 3…Rc2+ 4 Kb5 gh 5 B×f4 h3, while 3 h3 is met by 3…Rh2. If 3 Bd8!, then 3…h6!, and the natural 4 h4 is refuted by 4…Rd2! 5 Bc7 gh and Black wins a bishop for the h-pawn. What remains is 4 h3 Rh2 5 Bb7 Kd7 6 Bf6 R×h3 7 Kd4 ∓ (Dvoretsky).

2…R×h2 3 Bd5+ Ke7 4 Kd4 Kf6 5 Ke3+ Kg6 6 Be1 f4+ 7 Kd4 h5 8 Ke5 h4 9 Be4+ Kf7?!

As Stefan Kindermann indicated, an easy win could have been achieved with 9…Kh6 10 Kf6 (10 Kf5 Rg2 11 Bb4 h3 12 Kf6 Kh5 13 Bg6+ Kh4 14 Be1+ Rg3) 10…h3 11 Bb4 Re2 12 Bg6 Re6+! 13 K×e6 K×g6. Now White finds a clever method to stubbornly resist.

14-28



W?

10 B×h4! gh

10…R×h4? 11 Kf5 Rh6 12 K×g5 Rf6 13 Bf5=.

11 K×f4 Rg2 12 Bf5 Kf6 13 Bh3 Rg1 14 Bg4

There were opinions that this position is drawish. However, Dolmatov suggested an uncomplicated plan that could still bring Black victory. With 14…Rg3!, he chained the white king to the f4-square (if the king retreats, then h4-h3 wins at once). Thereafter the black king marches into the hostile camp: …Ke7-d6-d5-d4 etc.

14…Rb1?! 15 Bh3 Rb4+?

It was not too late for a rook retreat to g1.

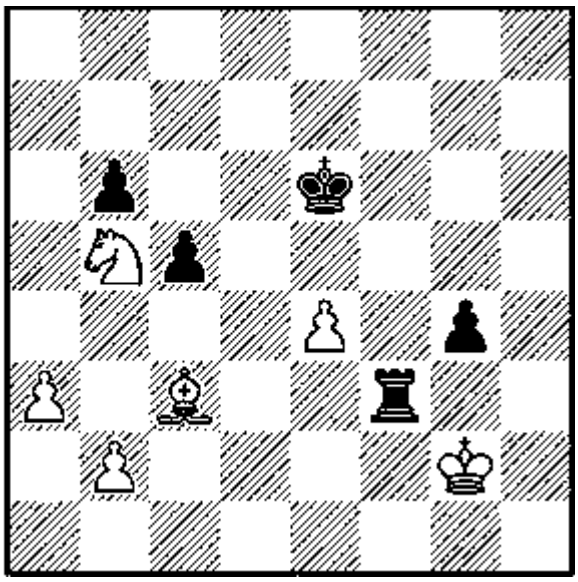
16 Ke3 Ke5 17 Bg4 Rb3+ 18 Kf2 Kf4 19 Kg2 Rb2+ 20 Kh3 Kg5 (20…Rf2 21 Bh5) **21 Bc8**, and the game soon ended in a draw.

Alexandria – Chiburdanidze

Borzhomi/Tbilisi wm (4), 1981

14-29

B



The game was adjourned in this position. The minor pieces are stronger than the rook here, but, as analysis has showed, White's advantage is not sufficient for a win against a precise defense.

1…Kd7!

An excellent maneuver that emphasizes the unfortunate position of the white knight. Black will use the time that must be wasted on bringing it into play to set up counterplay on the queenside by means of …b6-b5. Black's main goal is to exchange as many pawns as possible.

An immediate attack against the e-pawn was much weaker. After 1…Rf4? 2 e5 Kd7 3 Kg3 Ra4 4 Nd6 Ke6 5 Kh4, Black loses because of zugzwang: 5…Kd5 6 Nc8! Kc6 7 Ne7+ Kd7 8 Nd5 Kc6 9 Nf6 b5 10 Kg3! b4 11 e6!, or 5…Rf4 6 Ne8! Kf5 7 Ng7+ Kg6 8 e6 Re4 9 a4! c4 10 Bd4! Kh7 11 Bf6 Kg6 12 e7.

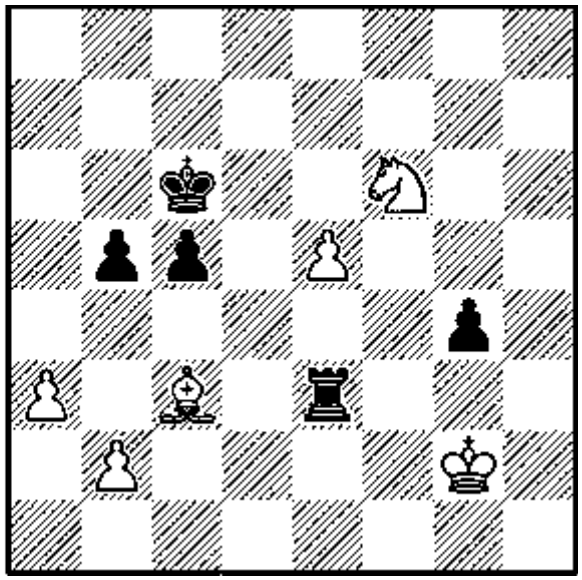
If Black plays 1…Re3?, then 2 e5? Kd5 3 Nc7+ Kc6 4 Ne8 b5 transposes to the actual course of the game, but White has a better choice: 2 Nc7+! Kd6 (2…Kd7? 3 Nd5 R×e4 4 Nf6+) 3 Ne8+ (3 Nd5? R×e4 4 N×b6 Kc6) 3…Ke7 (3…Ke6 4 Ng7+ Kd7 5 e5!+–) 4 Nf6 Ke6 5 Nd5! (5 e5 Kf5) 5…R×e4 6 N×b6 Kd6 7 a4 Kc6 8 a5 with excellent winning chances.

2 e5 Kc6 3 Nd6 b5! 4 Kg1!

A clever trap. The natural looking 4…Rf4? (△ 5…b4) would be refuted by 5 e6!! K×d6 6 Be5+!.

4…Rg3+ 5 Kf2 Rd3! 6 Kg2 (6 Ne4 b4! 7 ab cb 8 B×b4 Rd4) **6…Rf3** (rather than 6…Re3? 7 Nf5) **7 Ne8 Re3 8 Nf6**

14-30



B?

8…b4! 9 ab cb 10 Bd4!?

After 10 B×b4 R×e5 11 Bc3 Rf5!? (11…Rc5!?) 12 N×g4 Kb5, White would have no time to safely preserve his last remaining pawn.

10…Re1!

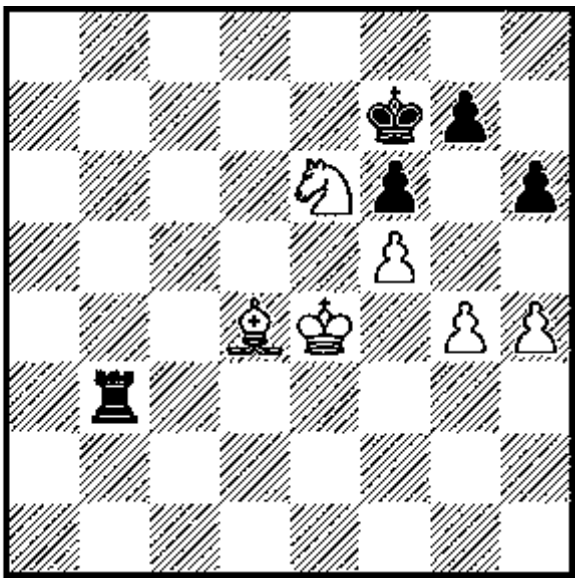
A final point. 10…Rd3? would have been wrong in view of 11 e6! Kd6 12 Ne4+! K×e6 (12…Ke7 13 Bf6+) 13 Nc5+ Kd5 14 N×d3 K×d4, and now White employs the familiar technique of protecting the pawn with the knight: 15 Nc1! Ke3 16 Nb3! Kd3 17 Na5 b3 18 Kg3 Kc2 19 Nc4 Kd3 20 Na3+–.

11 Kg3 Rd1 12 Be3 Rb1 13 Bd4 Rd1 14 Be3 Draw.

If both sides have three pawns placed on the same wing, the defender may hope for a draw (only if, of course, his pawn structure is devoid of grave flaws).

Capablanca – Lasker
St. Petersburg 1914

14-31



B

1…Rb4 2 Kd5 Rb1 3 g5 (White has no better plan to follow) **3…hg 4 hg fg 5 N×g5+ Kg8 6 Ne6 Rd1! 7 Ke4** (7 N×g7 R×d4+) **7…Kf7 8 Ng5+**

8 B×g7 could be met with 8…Re1+ 9 Kd5 Rf1=.

8…Kg8 9 Ke5 Re1+

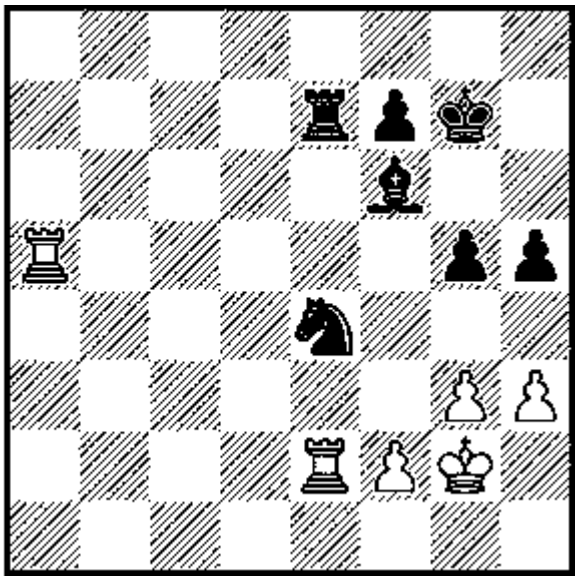
Capablanca made 20 more moves trying to win, but finally agreed to a draw.

Tragicomedies

Timman – Karpov
Bugojno 1980

14-32

W?



One pair of rooks will certainly be exchanged, but how can White do it favorably?

1 f3?

A grave positional error based on a tactical oversight. Timman planned to exchange pawns after 1…Nd6 2 R×e7 B×e7 3 h4! gh 4 Re5! (but not 4 R×h5? immediately in view of 4…f5!, and if 5 gh then 5…Bf6 △ 6…Kg6+–) 4…Kf6 (4…Bd8 5 Rd5!) 5 R×h5=, but underestimated Black's strong reply.

1…Nc5! 2 R×e7 B×e7 3 Ra7

After 3 f4 gf 4 gf f5 (△ …Kf6, …Bd6, …Ne6), the f4-pawn is lost.

3…Bd6

The erroneous advance of the f-pawn has weakened the dark squares, and White's position is hopeless now.

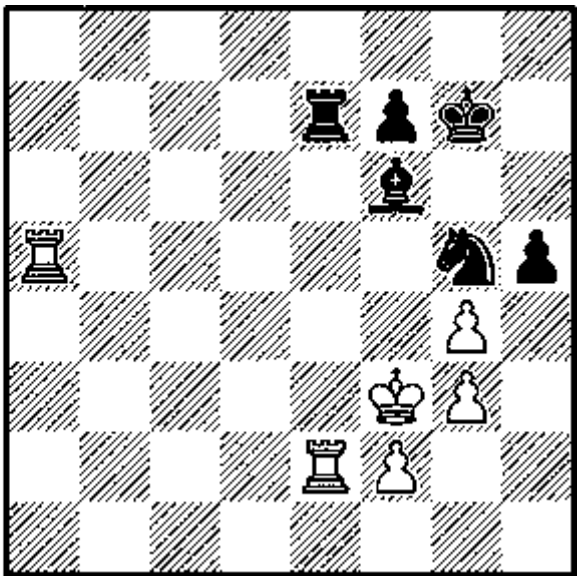
4 Ra8 h4 5 gh gh 6 Kf2 Ne6 7 Ra1 Bg3+ 8 Ke3 Nf4 9 Rh1 Kf6 10 Ke4 Ke6 11 Kd4 Kf5 12 Kc3 Ne6 13 Kd3 Kf4 14 Ke2 Ng5 (of course, not 14…Nd4+ 15 Kd3 N×f3?? 16 Rf1 △ Ke2) White resigned.

Let us try to improve White's defense. The attempt to force pawn exchanges by means of 1 h4? gh 2 R×h5 should be rejected at once in view of the counterstroke 2…N×g3! 3 R×e7 N×h5–+. The choice should be made between 1 Ra4 and 1 Kf3.

Timman recommends 1 Ra4!?, and if 1…Nd6, then 2 R×e7 B×e7 3 f4! (3…g4 is met by 4 hg hg 5 f5). 1…Nc5! is better: 2 R×e7 B×e7 (2…N×a4 3 Rc7 Nc3 4 Kf3) 3 Rc4 (3 Ra7 Bd6) 3…Kg6. This position is certainly better for White than that from the actual game, but still not completely safe. Timman demonstrates that the following disposition of Black's forces can be successful against White's passive defense: the pawn goes to f6, bishop to e5, knight to f5, and thereafter …h5-h4 follows. It is not clear whether White can prevent this setup by active measures.

Timman condemns 1 Kf3!? because of 1…g4+! 2 hg Ng5+. But in fact, the outcome here would be anything but clear.

14-33



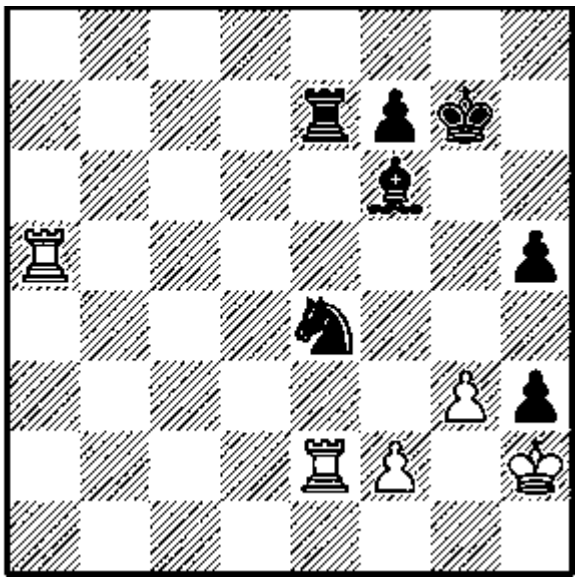
W

First, let's look at 3 R×g5+ B×g5 4 gh Kh6?! 5 Ra2! K×h5. Can Black convert his extra bishop to a win? We looked at a similar situation with Black's pawn on the g-file – then Black retained real winning chances – among other things, there is the idea of pushing the pawn to g4, followed by the exchange of all the pieces at f2. With an f-pawn instead, Black has fewer resources, so the position looks drawn.

However, as pointed out by Karsten Müller, the immediate exchange of rooks would lead to victory: 4…R×e2! 5 K×e2, and now not 5…Kh6? 6 f4 △ 7 g4=, but 5…Bc1! followed by 6…Kh6. The attempt to avoid the exchange of rooks by 4 Ra2 (instead of 4 gh) would allow Black, by means of 4…h4!, to execute the exchange of pawns in a more favorable way. White's setup grows flimsier, and probably will not last.

But now, let us offer an improvement for the defense: 2 Kg2! gh+ 3 Kh2!.

14-34



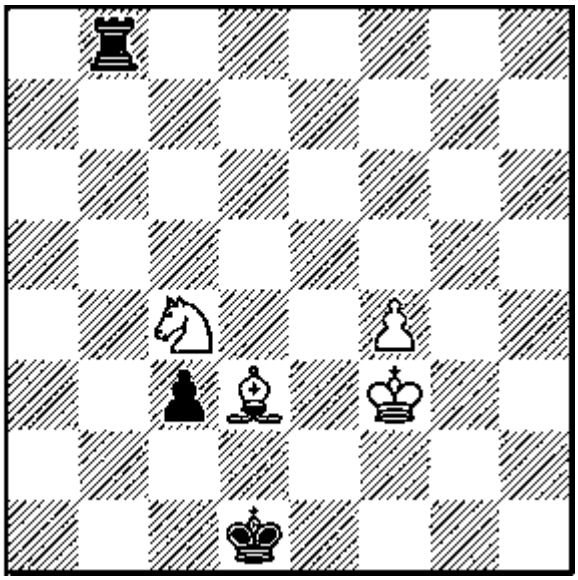
B

Here is an approximate line: 3…h4 4 gh (4 g4? Ng5! 5 R×e7 B×e7 6 f4 Ne6–+) 4…B×h4 5 Raa2! (5 Rf5? is bad: 5…Bf6 6 f3 Ng5 7 R×e7 B×e7 8 f4 Ne6 9 K×h3 Kg6 10 Kg4 Bd6–+) 5…B×f2 (otherwise K×h3) 6 R×f2 N×f2 7 R×f2, with a drawn "rook plus f- and h-pawns" endgame.

Exercises

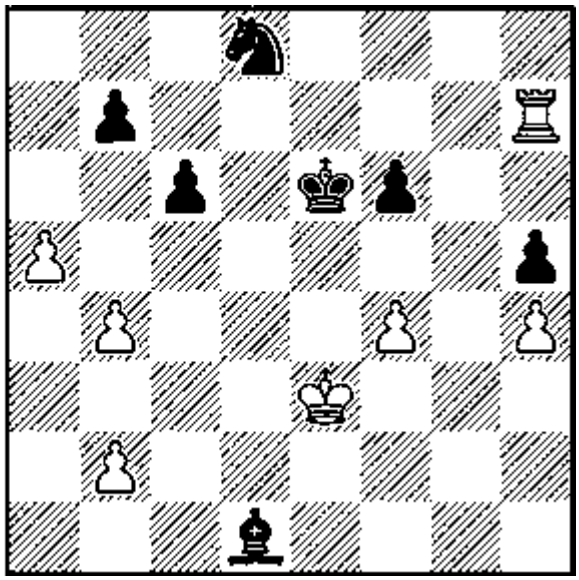
14-35

14/1
B?



14-36

14/2
W?/Play



Queen vs. Various Pieces

A rook and a bishop or a rook and a knight (without pawns) draw easily against a queen if, of course, they are not so disunited that the opponent can rapidly win one of pieces.

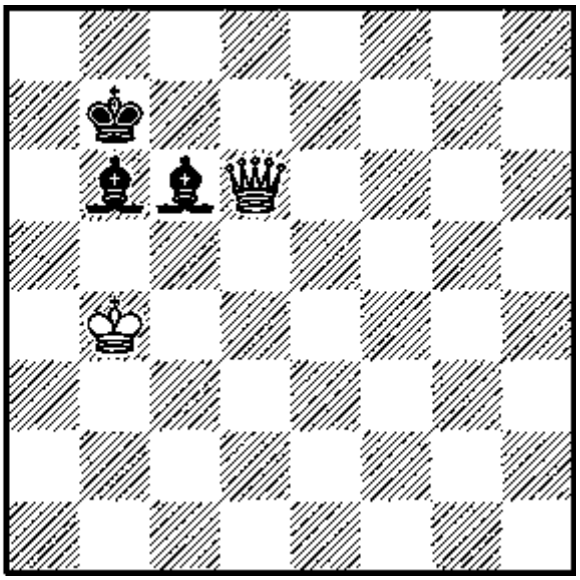
Two knights can resist a queen successfully. They are best placed on squares adjacent to the king.

Two bishops, curiously enough, are almost never able to draw against a queen, although the winning process is often complicated and requires many dozens of moves.

The only drawing position was discovered as early as the 18th century.

G. Lolli, 1763

14-37
$
W



1 Qe7+ Kc8 2 Qe6+

In case of 2 Qd6 Kb7 3 Kc4, Black should play 3…Ba7! 4 Qe7+ Kb8 (with the idea 5…Bb6=) or even 4…Kb6=, as 3…Bc7? loses to 4 Qe7 Kb6 5 Qb4+ Ka6 6 Kc5.

2…Kb7 3 Qd6 Ba7

3…Bc7 4 Qe7 Kb6 is also playable; White dos not have 5 Qb4+.

4 Qe7+ Kb6! (rather than 4…Kb8? 5 Ka5+–) **5 Qd8+ Kb7 6 Ka5 Bc5!**

White is in zugzwang; every possible move allows the black bishop to return to b6.

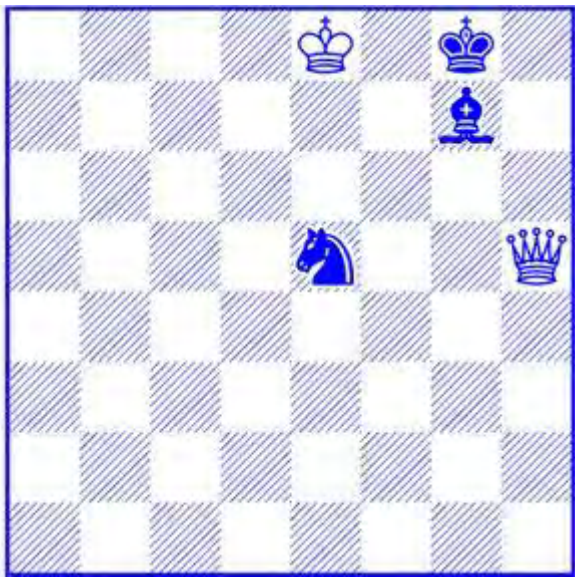
If White brings his king to e7, the bishop occupies the c7-square, with the same position. This defensive method saves Black only when his king is on b7 (or symmetrically on g7, b2, and g2).

A bishop and a knight usually lose, but some very rare exceptions exist; one of them should be remembered.

In the next diagram, Black's pieces protect his king from all of White's attempts to approach; this setup cannot be destroyed.

M. Karstedt, 1903

14-38
W



1 Ke7 Bh8 2 Ke6 Bg7 3 Kf5 Bh8 4 Kg5 Bg7 5 Qe8+ Kh7 6 Kh5 Bh8 7 Qe7+ Bg7=.

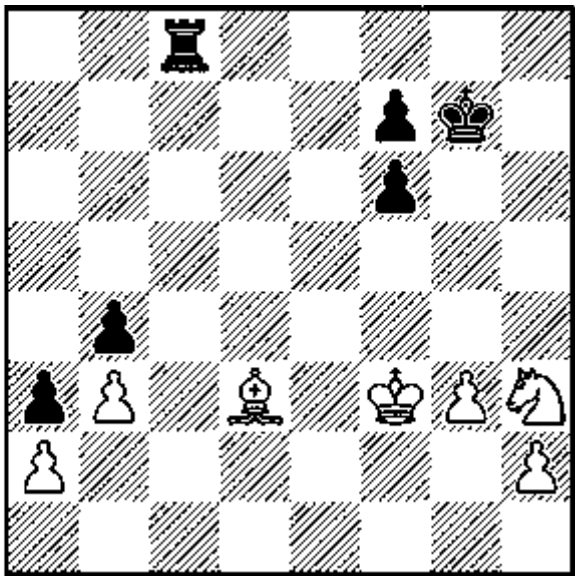
In practical situations (with pawns on the board) one can often save a difficult position by means of a queen sacrifice or by letting an enemy pawn queen for the sake of building a fortress.

Let us come back to the position where we have made a break when analyzing the Beliavsky-Dolmatov endgame (in the section "Rook versus Two Minor Pieces").

Beliavsky – Dolmatov
USSR ch, Minsk 1979

14-39

W?



White stands worse and has to fight for a draw. The most reliable method is:

1 Nf2! Rc1

1…Rc3 is weaker because after 2 Ke3, the sacrifice 2…R×b3? fails to 3 Nd1! Rb2 4 N×b2 b3 5 Bb1!+–. If 2…Rc1, then 3 Kd2 Ra1 4 Bc2 R×a2 5 Nd3=.

2 h4!! (the pawn should leave the second rank) **2…Ra1**

2…f5 is useless: 3 B×f5 Ra1 (3…Rc3+ 4 Kf4 R×b3 5 Nd1!) 4 Nd3 R×a2 5 N×b4 Rb2 6 Bc2=.

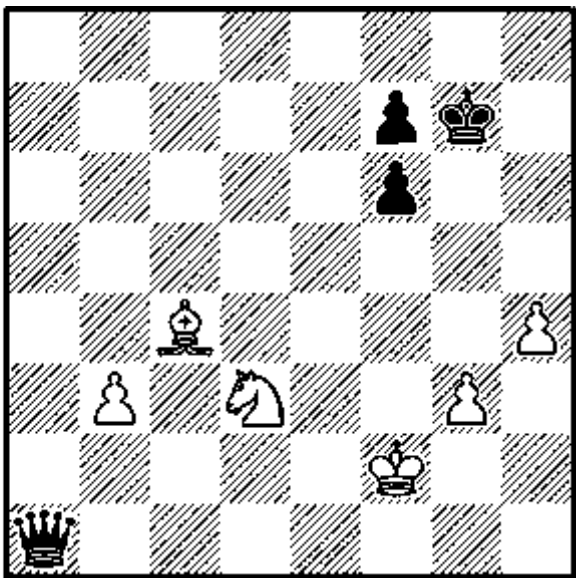
3 Bc4 R×a2 4 Nd3 Rf2+

Or 4…Rd2 5 N×b4 a2 6 N×a2 with a draw. The idea behind h2-h4 is clear now – the endgame would have been hopeless without the h-pawn.

5 K×f2 a2 6 N×b4 a1Q 7 Nd3

14-40

B



White has the following setup in mind: Nf4, Bd5, Kg2, and Black can neither create mating threats nor attack the g3-pawn with his king and queen simultaneously.

Moreover, analysis shows that this position is drawn even when Black maintains his b4-pawn, as could happen in the line 1 Nf4?! Rc3! (1…Rc1? 2 Nd5) 2 h4! R×b3 3 ab a2 4 Bc4 a1Q 5 Kg2.

Beliavsky, despite considering the matter for a long time, failed to find the idea of a fortress with two minor pieces. He played 1 Ke3?! Rc1 (1…Rc3 2 Nf2! R×b3? 3 Nd1!+–) 2 Nf4 Ra1 3 Nd5 R×a2 4 N×b4 R×h2∓.

Readers may learn how Dolmatov managed to win this captivating endgame in brilliant fashion from my book *School of Chess Excellence 1 – Endgame Analysis*, in the chapter "The Strongest

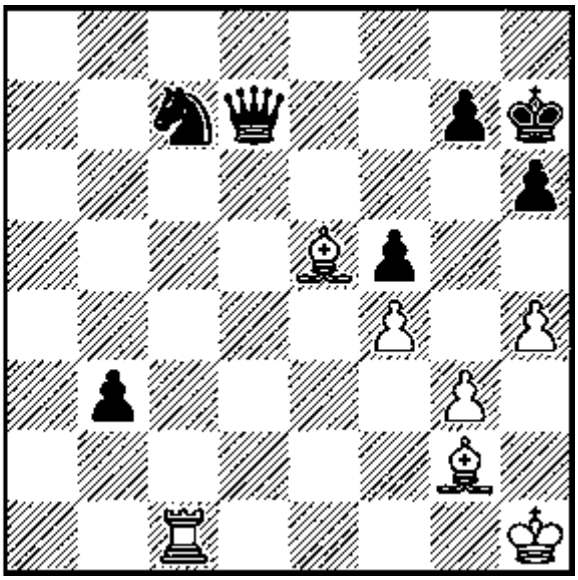
Piece is the Rook!.”

Sveshnikov – Psakhis

Erevan zt 1982

14-41

W?



1 R×c7! Q×c7 2 B×c7 b2 3 Kh2 b1Q 4 Be5

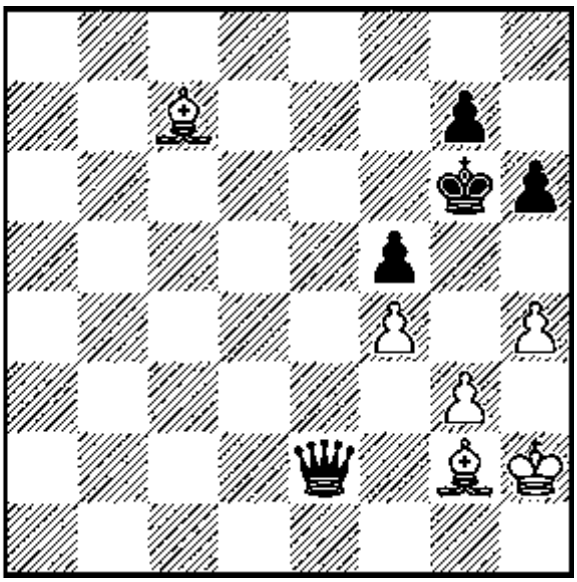
The queen enjoys unlimited freedom of action but cannot destroy the enemy defense without the king’s support. Yet the king cannot break through as the bishops keep two adjacent diagonals, h1-a8 and e5-b8, under control. Hence, the way to the queenside is closed. If the king comes to h5, White denies access to g4 by playing Kh3.

On g7-g5, the simplest reaction is a double exchange on g5: the dark-square bishop will safely protect White’s remaining pawn from f4. But White may also trade only the h-pawns and allow Black’s …g5-g4.

4…Qd3 5 Bb8 Qe3 6 Bc7 Qe2 7 Be5 Qh5 8 Kg1 Kg6 9 Bc7 Qe2 10 Kh2

14-42

B



10…Kh7

Black prepares …g7-g5. Another plan offered better practical chances: to force Kh3, to occupy g1 with the queen, to bring the king back into the center, and finally to push the g-pawn to g5 in order to exploit the unsafe position of the white king. For example, 10…Qe1 11 Be5 Qf2 12 Bc7 Kh5 13 Kh3□ Qg1! 14 Be5 Kg6 15 Bd5 Kh7 16 Bb8 g6 17 Bg2 (17 Be5 g5 18 hg hg 19 fg Qc5) 17…Kg7 18 Be5+ Kf7 19 Bd5+ Ke7 20 Bg2 Ke6 21 Bb8 (21 Bc7 g5! 22 hg hg 23 fg Qa7!–+) 21…g5! 22 hg hg 23 fg Qd4–+ (or 23…Qa1–+).

The simplest way to parry this plan is 12 Bc3! (instead of 12 Bc7). In that case, 12…Kh5 13

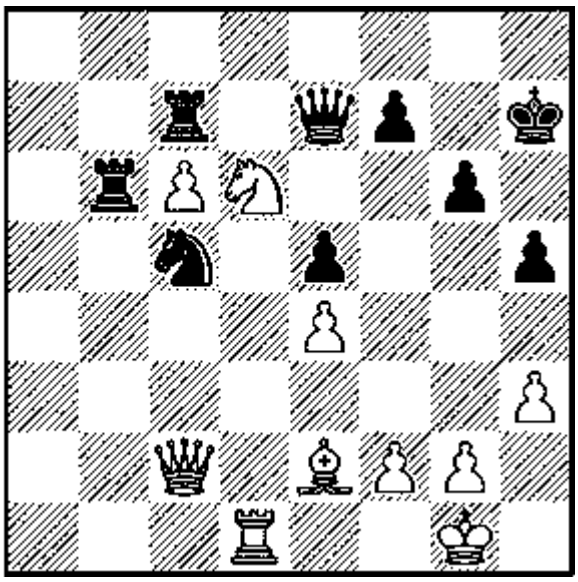
Kh3 Qg1 is useless in view of 14 B×g7.

11 Bb8 Kg8 12 Bc7 Kf7 13 Bb8 Ke7 14 Bc7 Kd7 15 Be5 g5 16 hg hg 17 Bb8 Kc8 18 Be5 Qe3 19 Bh1 Kd7 20 Bg2 g4 21 Bh1 Qe2+ 22 Bg2 Qe3 23 Bb8 Qb6 24 Be5 Ke7 25 Kh1 Qh6+ 26 Kg1 Kd7 27 Bd4 Draw.

Bronstein – Keres
Amsterdam ct 1956

14-43

W?



White lost this position rapidly:

1 Bb5? Ne6 2 Ba4?!

2 Qc4 Nd4 3 R×d4! (3 Qd5 N×b5 4 N×b5 Rcxc6–+) 3…ed 4 Q×d4 would have been more tenacious, but the game could hardly have been held anyway.

2…Nd4 3 Qc5 Rbxc6! 4 B×c6 R×c6 White resigned.

White missed a rather simple combination that would have led to a drawn position with a rook and a bishop against a queen:

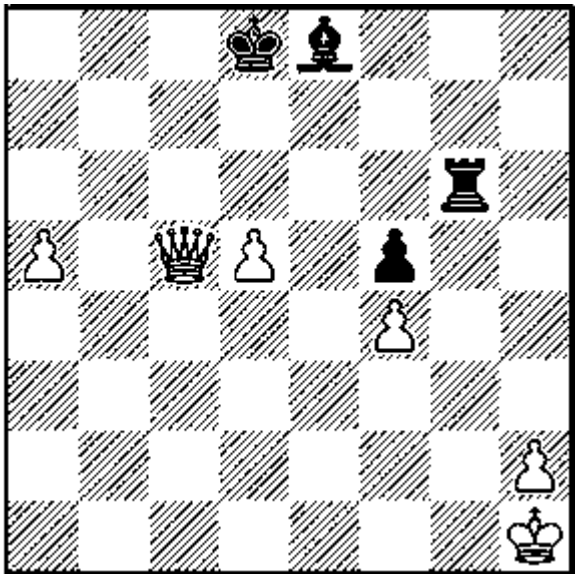
1 Q×c5!! Rcxc6 2 Q×b6! R×b6 3 Nc8 Qc5 4 N×b6 Q×b6∓.

Tragicomedies

Fichtl – Blatný
Bratislava 1956

14-44

W

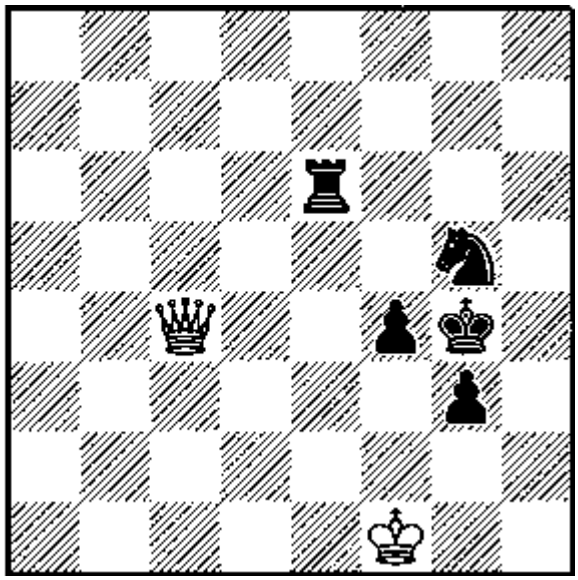


White, in this completely winning position, let down his guard for a moment.

1 d6?? Bc6+! 2 Q×c6 Rg1+ 3 K×g1 stalemate.

Zagoriansky – Tolush
Moscow tt 1945

14-45



B?

Black has an obvious advantage. He can win, for example, by means of 1…Re8! 2 Qa4 (2 Qd4 Re1+!; 2 Qb4 Nf3; 2 Qb5 f3! 3 Q×e8 g2+ 4 Kf2 Nh3+; 2 Kg2 Re2+! 3 Q×e2+ f3+) 2…Re4 3 Qd7+ Kh4, and the threat 4…f3 cannot be parried. However Tolush decided to produce a "brilliant" win.

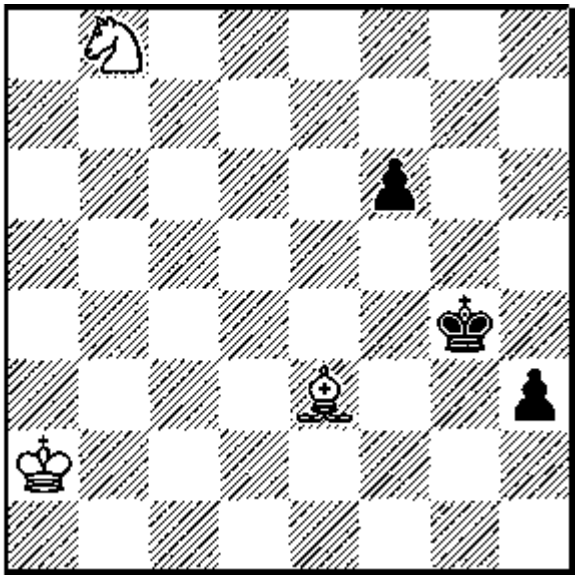
1…Kh3? 2 Q×f4 g2+ 3 Kf2 (3 Kg1? Re1+) **3…Rf6**

Black had only expected 4 Q×f6? Ne4+.

4 Kg1! R×f4 stalemate.

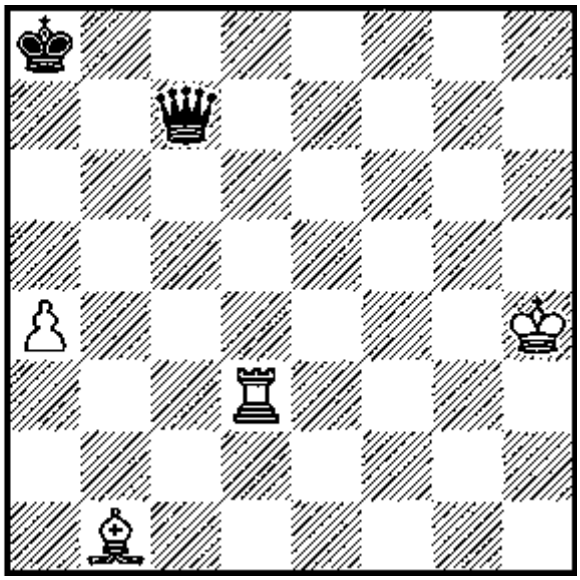
Exercises

14-46



14/3
W?

14-47



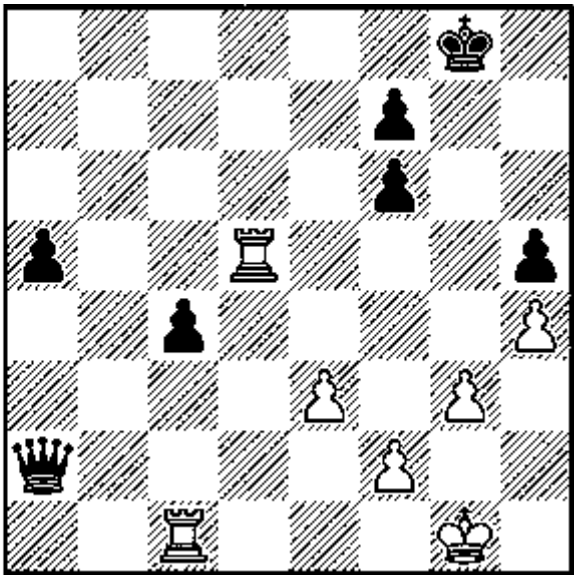
14/4
W?

Queen vs. Two Rooks

Rooks are powerful when they act together. A standard method is doubling the rooks to ***win, or at least stop, an enemy pawn.*** Rooks can also create mating threats, particularly when the opponent's king is cut off along an edge.

Chernin – Marjanovic
Subotica izt 1987

14-48



W

It was the last round of the Interzonal tournament; grandmaster Chernin followed my recommendation and employed a sharp line of the Queen's Gambit that would lead to the diagrammed position if Black, as had been the case, made a slight inaccuracy. I evaluated this position as winning for White when it was reached in analysis. Black's pawns are isolated and weak; White consequently eliminates them by doubling the rooks and switches to a kingside attack thereafter.

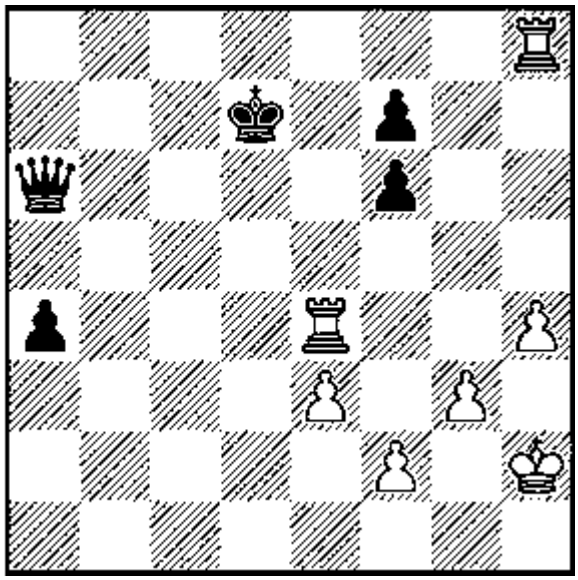
1 Rc5!

In case of 1 R×h5? Qd2!, the separation of the rooks tells: 2 R×c4?? Qd1+.

1…a4 2 R1xc4 Kg7 3 Rb4

Chernin hastens to double the rooks against the a-pawn. The sharper continuation 3 Rf4!? merited attention. The advance 3…a3, as on the previous move, is still not favorable for Black: 4 Ra5 Qb1+ 5 Kg2 (△ 6 Rfa4) 5…Qb7+ 6 e4 Qb4 7 Ra6 △ Rf3. After 3…Qb1+ 4 Kh2, 4…Qb2 is useless in view of 5 Ra5 a3 6 Kg2+–. If 4…Qb6 instead, then 5 R×h5! Qa6 6 Rg4+ Kf8 7 Rh8+ Ke7 8 Re4+ Kd7.

14-49



W

Now White can bring his rook back to defend: 9 Rd4+ Ke7 10 Rd2 a3 11 Ra2. The attack against the king is, however, even stronger: 9 Rf8! a3 (9…Kd6 10 R×f7+–) 10 R×f7+ Kd8 11 Rb4 Kc8 (11…Qd6 12 Ra4) 12 Rg4 with inevitable mate or win of the queen. A rather standard attack with two rooks!

3…Qa3 (3…a3 4 Ra5+–) **4 Rcc4 Qa1+ 5 Kg2 a3 6 Rc5 Qd1 7 Ra5 Qd6 8 Rc4!?**

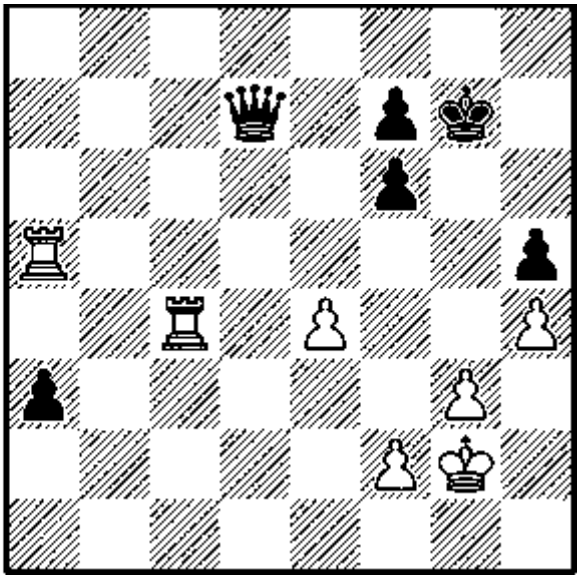
Chernin is not satisfied with the position after 8 Rba4 Qc6+ 9 e4 f5 10 R×a3 fe, so he tries to get more.

8…Qd7!

8…f5 is quite bad: 9 Rc3 a2 10 Rca3.

9 e4

14-50



B?

9…Qd3?!

Black could have made it more difficult for his opponent by playing 9…f5! 10 R×a3 (10 R×f5 Qa7; 10 ef Qb7+) 10…fe. Here is a possible continuation: 11 Rc5 Qb7! (11…f5? 12 Raa5 Qb7 13 R×f5 e3+ 14 Rf3; 11…Qd6? 12 Rg5+) 12 Re3 Kg6 13 Rg5+ Kh6 14 Re5, and now neither 14…f6? 15 Re6 Kg6 16 R3xe4, nor 14…Kg6? 15 R3xe4 f5 16 Re6+ Kf7 17 Re7+, but 14…Qa8!, and Black is still in business.

10 Rca4 Qc2 11 R×a3 Q×e4+ 12 Rf3

This is the position Chernin had aimed for from the very beginning. The win is an elementary matter because of Black's pawn weaknesses. However even with a regular pawn structure (the f6-pawn is moved to g6), as happened in Gurgenidze-Averbakh (USSR ch, Baku 1961), White won by means of a double rook attack against the f7-pawn.

12…Kg6 13 Ra6 Qd4 14 Rf4

The immediate 14 Raxf6+ was also playable, but this delay of the capture does no harm to White.

14…Qd5+ 15 Kh2 Qd8 16 Rc6 Qe7 17 Ra6

Another way was 17 g4!? hg 18 Kg3 (planning 19 Rcxf6+) 18…Qa3+ (18…Kh5 19 Rf5+) 19 K×g4+–.

17…Qd8 18 Raxf6+ Q×f6 19 R×f6+ K×f6 20 Kh3 Kf5 21 f3 f6 22 Kg2!

22 g4+? hg+ 23 fg+ Kf4⊙= was premature.

22…Kg6

Or 22…Ke5 23 g4 hg 24 fg Kf4 25 Kh3⊙+–.

23 g4 Black resigned.

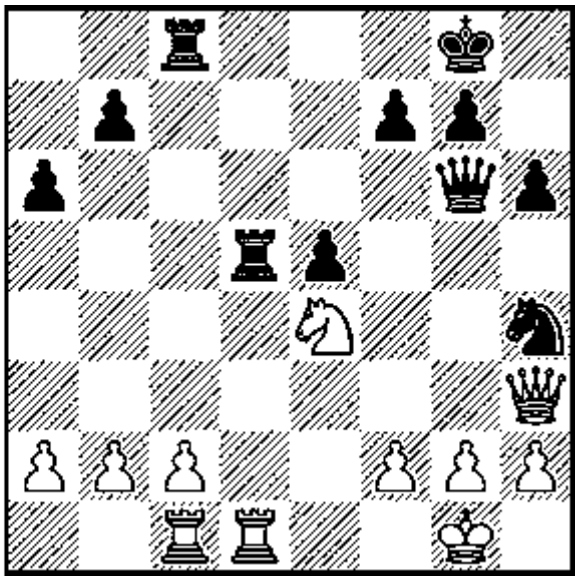
The queen has the upper hand when the rooks are disconnected or doomed to passivity because of the need to stop an opponent's passed pawns or to defend their own pawns.

Evans – Rossolimo

USA ch, New York 1965/66

14-51

B?



I do not want to deny my readers the pleasure of enjoying the nice combination that resulted in the balance of material being discussed here.

1…R×c2!! 2 Q×h4 Rd4!

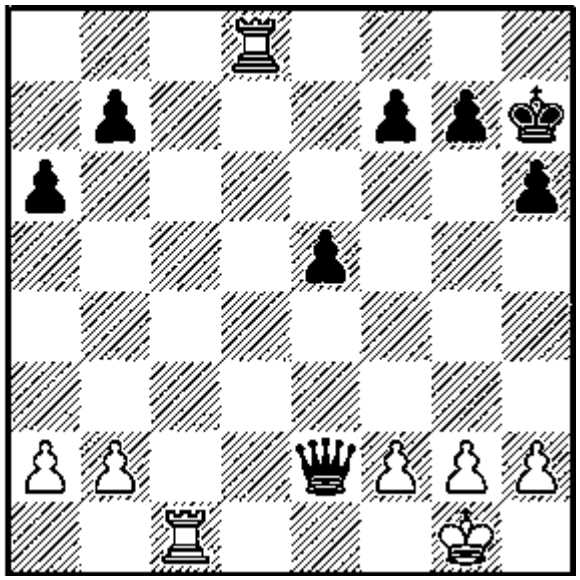
Rather than 2…R×c1? 3 R×c1 Rd4, in view of 4 f3! f5 5 Qg3!.

3 Qd8+!

3 f3?? fails now to 3…Q×g2#.

3…R×d8 4 R×d8+ Kh7 5 R×c2 Q×e4 6 Rc1 Qe2!

14-52



W

7 Rb1

Not wishing to part with a pawn, Larry Evans sticks to passive tactics which only allow him to double his rooks on the first rank. Nicholas Rossolimo, skillfully combining the strengthening of his position with the preventing of the activation of the enemy rooks, ultimately earned a welldeserved victory.

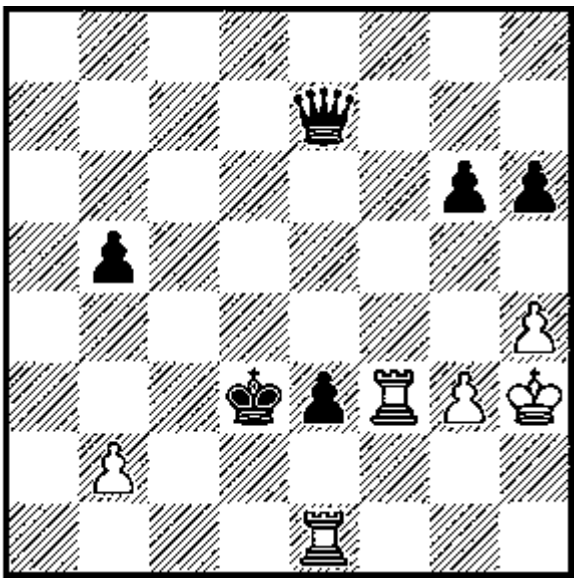
It seems to me that it would have been reasonable for White to try for active counterplay: 7 g3!? Q×b2 8 Rc7 b5 (8…Q×a2 9 R×b7) 9 R×f7 Q×a2 10 Rdd7 Qa1+ 11 Kg2 e4 12 Rb7 (or 12 h4!?) and sometimes even an attack on the eighth rank is possible in combination with the move h4-h5.

7…f5! 8 Rdd1 e4 9 Re1 Qc4 10 a3 Qa2! (it is important not to allow 11 Rbc1) **11 g3 Kg6 12 Kg2?!**

Evans once again fails to seize the opportunity to activate his position, as shown by Yuri Averbakh: 12 Rbc1! Q×b2 13 Rb1 Q×a3 14 R×b7 or 13…Qd2 14 Rb6+ Kg5 15 Re3.

12…Qb3 13 Kg1 Qa2 14 Kg2 Kf6 15 f3 Ke5 16 fe fe 17 h4 Qb3 18 Kh3 Qc2 19 Rec1 Qf2 20 Rf1 Qb6 21 Kg2 g6 22 Rf8 Qb5! 23 Rf2 e3 24 Re1 Ke4 25 a4 Qc5 26 Kh3 (26 b4!?) **26…b5! 27 ab ab 28 Rf6 Qe5** (28…Kd3!) **29 Rf8 Qe7 30 Rf4+ Kd3 31 Rf3**

14-53



B

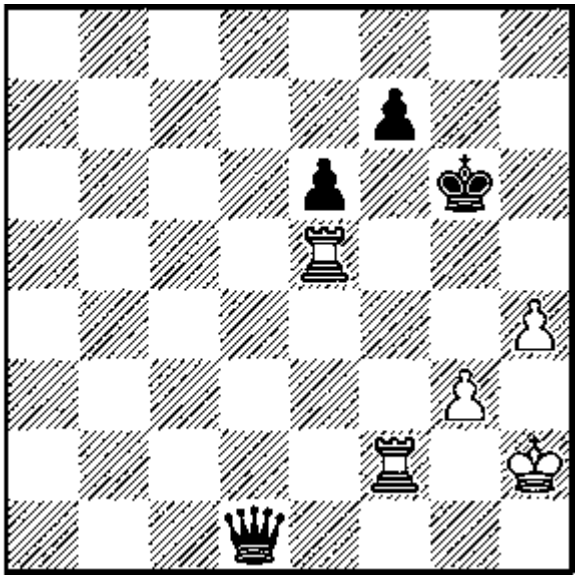
31…Kd2?!

Technically better is 31…h5! or 31…b4!, but the text does not let the win slip.

32 Rfxe3 Q×e3 33 R×e3 K×e3 34 Kg4 Ke4 35 b4 Ke5! 36 Kf3 Kd5 37 Kf4 (37 Kg4 Ke4!, but not 37…Kc4? 38 h5=) **37…Kc4 38 g4 K×b4 39 g5 h5 40 Ke5 Kc5 41 Kf6 b4 42 K×g6 b3 43 Kh6 b2 44 g6 b1Q 45 g7 Qb3 46 Kh7 Kd6 47 g8Q Q×g8+ 48 K×g8 Ke5 49 Kf7 Kf5!** White resigned.

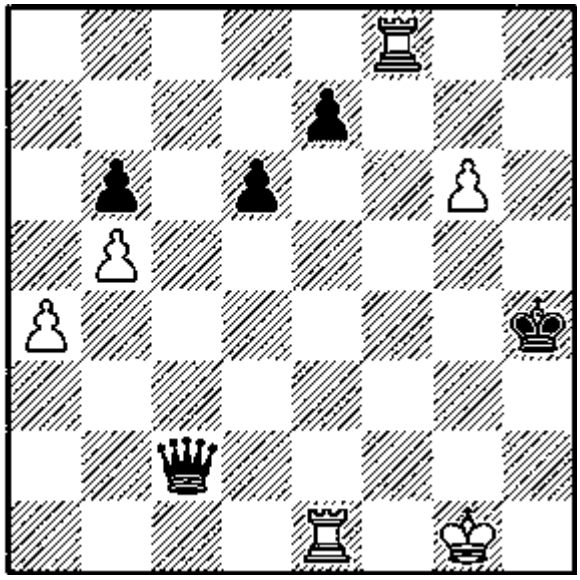
Exercises

14-54



14/5
B?

14-55



14/6
W?

Chapter 15

General Endgame Ideas

Along with the many techniques that apply to specific material relationships, this book also deals with more general principles and methods of playing the endgame which are used in a wide variety of circumstances. In this chapter we will reiterate the most important endgame ideas, and refine our impressions of them here and there.

"There are three things that give the endgame its characteristic features: the active power of the king, the passed pawn and the need to make a move, changing the dynamic on the board, the so-called *zugzwang*," wrote Emanuel Lasker in *Common Sense in Chess* (Russian edition, 1924).

Having studied the preceding chapters, I hope you are now convinced that skillful endgame play does not merely consist of automatically following some prescribed formula of dry and dull rules. In endgames, just as in other stages of the struggle, complex variations must be calculated and beautiful hidden combinations must be discovered. Theory only aids our search for the proper solution. Some of the practical endgames and studies that we have examined are by no means aesthetically inferior to the finest creative examples from the opening and middlegame.

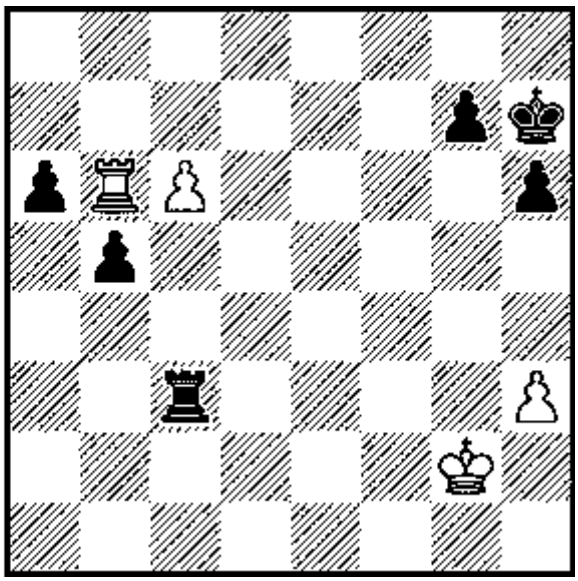
Here I would like to acquaint the readers with some new and spectacular examples that were not included earlier. Thus, this chapter is devoted not only to endgame strategy, but also to endgame tactics, especially in the exercises at the end of each section.

King's Activity

"In the middlegame the king is a mere spectator; in the endgame on the other hand – one of the major participants," Nimzovitch wrote in *My System*. **Make use of every available moment to improve your king's placement – its active position is often decisive for the outcome of the fight.**

Tondivar – Lutz
Leeuwarden 1994

15-1



B?

1…b4? 2 R×a6 b3 3 Rb6 followed with 4 c7 results in a draw, while 1…Ra3 can be met, say, with 2 Rb8, and the black rook must go back to c3.

Black can win only through a king advance!

1…Kg6! 2 R×a6 Kh5 3 Rb6

3 Ra7 fails after 3…R×c6 4 R×g7 Rg6+.

3…Kh4 4 R×b5 Rc2+ 5 Kg1 K×h3 (rather than 5…R×c6? 6 Rb3=) **6 Rb7**

6 Rb3+ Kh4 7 Rb4+ Kh5 8 Rb6 does not help in view of 8…g5 9 Kf1 g4 followed by …Kg5,

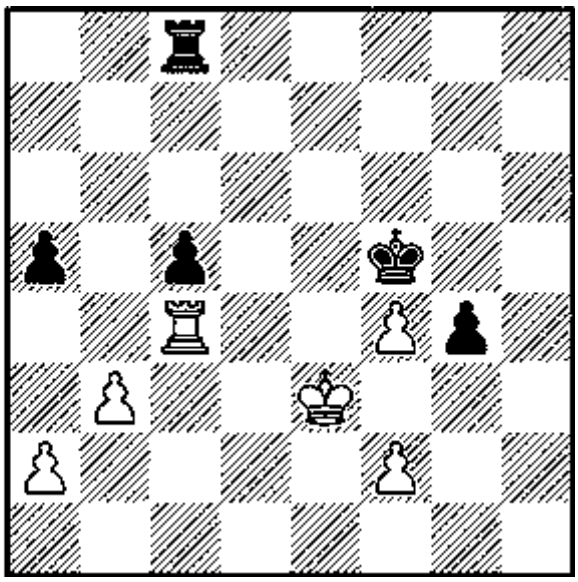
…h5, …Kh4.

6…g5 7 c7 g4 8 Rb6 h5 White resigned.

A king's advance is mostly directed to the center of the board, from which both wings are equally accessible. However this should not become a strict rule to follow blindly: in principle, a king's place is wherever the position requires.

Taimanov – Ree
Wijk aan Zee 1981

15-2



W?

White has an extra pawn and his rook is more active than Black's, but how does he bring the advantage home? The straightforward 1 Re4?! Kf6! 2 Re5? lets Black create enough counterplay to save the game after 2…a4! 3 Kd3 ab 4 ab Rb8 (4…Rd8+) 5 Kc3 Rb4.

The winning plan involves the king's march to g3 in order to attack the g4-pawn, regardless of how far the king moves from the center.

1 Ke2! Rc7 2 Kf1 Rd7

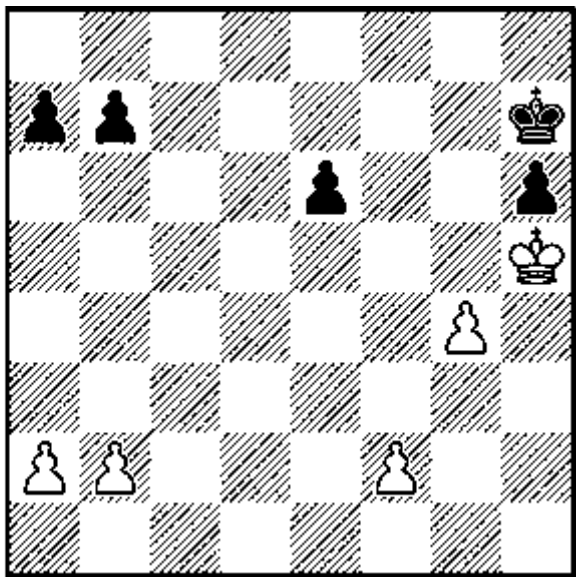
Otherwise Kg2-g3 followed by either Rc3-e3-e5+ or a2-a3 and b3-b4.

3 R×c5+ K×f4 4 Kg2 Rd2 5 R×a5 Rc2 (5…g3 6 Ra4+) **6 Ra4+ Kg5 7 Rc4 R×a2 8 Kg3** Black resigned.

Sometimes the route for a king's march should be prepared by means of pawn exchanges. This technique is called ***"widening the beachhead."***

A. Yusupov, 1995

15-3



W?

White has two active possibilities:

(a) to create a distant passed pawn by means of f2-f4, g4-g5, and f4xg5; and

(b) to widen the beachhead: the move g4-g5 is made when the f-pawn is still on f2, then the king goes to the e-pawn and, eventually, to the queenside.

However, both these plans fail if started immediately:

1 f4? Kg7 2 g5 hg 3 fg e5 4 Kh4 Kg6 5 Kg4 e4 6 Kf4 e3 7 K×e3 K×g5 8 Ke4 Kf6 9 Kd5 Ke7=

1 g5? hg 2 K×g5 Kg7 3 Kf4 Kf6 4 Ke4 e5 5 Kd5 Kf5 6 b4 (if 6 f3, both 6…Kf6 and 6…Kf4 7 Ke6 K×f3 8 K×e5 Ke3 9 Kd6 Kd3= are good) 6…b5 7 Kc5 a6 8 Kd5 e4 9 a3 Kf4 10 Ke6 Kg4! 11 Ke5 Kf3= (12 Kf5? e3).

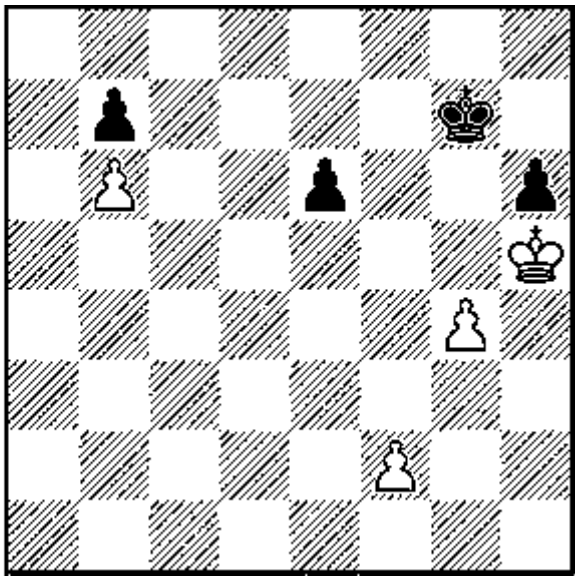
Before White clarifies the situation on the kingside, he should strengthen his position on the queenside to the utmost by means of a pawn advance.

1 b4! Kg7

Black has to wait. If 1…b5?, the plan with the distant passed pawn decides: 2 f4! Kg7 3 g5 hg 4 fg e5 5 Kh4! Kf7 6 Kg3! (the king detours around the mined g4-square) 6…Kg6 7 Kg4⊙ e4 8 Kf4 e3 9 K×e3 K×g5 10 Kd4 and Black's queenside pawns die as a consequence of the weakening advance …b7-b5.

2 b5 Kh7 3 a4 Kg7 4 a5 Kh7 5 b6 ab 6 ab Kg7

15-4



W?

From the point of view of the first plan, the situation has not changed. But the widening of the beachhead has become much more effective than in the initial position.

7 g5! hg 8 K×g5 Kf7 9 Kf4 Kf6 10 Ke4 Kf7

10…e5 is impossible here in view of 11 Kd5 Kf5 12 Kd6 Kf4 13 Kc7 Kf3 14 K×b7 K×f2 15 Kc6 e4 16 b7 with the winning endgame (a queen versus a central pawn).

11 Ke5 Ke7 12 f3! (White should preserve his second spare tempo for the future) **12…Kd7 13 Kf6 Kd6**

13…Kc6 14 K×e6 K×b6 15 f4 transposes into the main line.

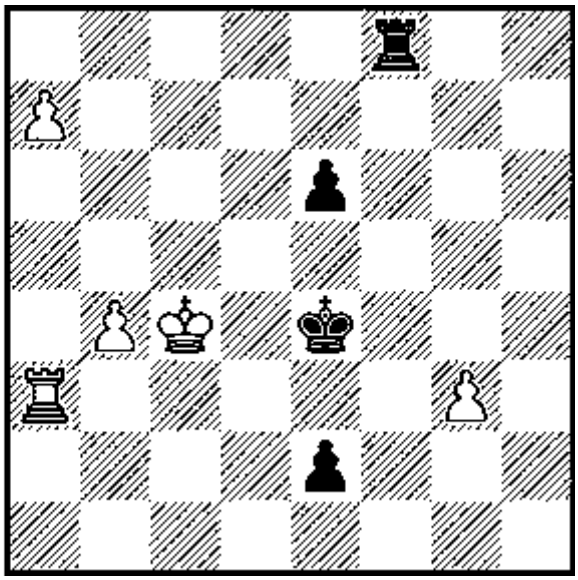
14 f4 Kd7 15 Kf7 Kd6 16 Ke8! (a routine technique: the opposition is utilized by means of an outflanking) **16…Kc6 17 Ke7 K×b6** (17…Kd5 18 Kd7) **18 K×e6 Kc7 19 f5 Kd8 20 Kf7! b5 21 f6 b4 22 Kg7 b3 23 f7 b2 24 f8Q+**

Böhm – Timman

Amsterdam 1977

15-5

W?



1 Ra1? Ra8 2 Re1 Ke3 followed by 3…R×a7 is quite hopeless for White.

1 Ra6!! e5 2 Ra1 Ra8 3 Re1 Kf3 4 Kd5!

This is the reason for 1 Ra6!. The white king has enough time to eliminate the e5-pawn (if 4…e4, then 5 R×e2).

4…R×a7 5 K×e5

The white king is looking at both wings. The black rook can attack any one of the pawns but then the king will support the remaining pawn.

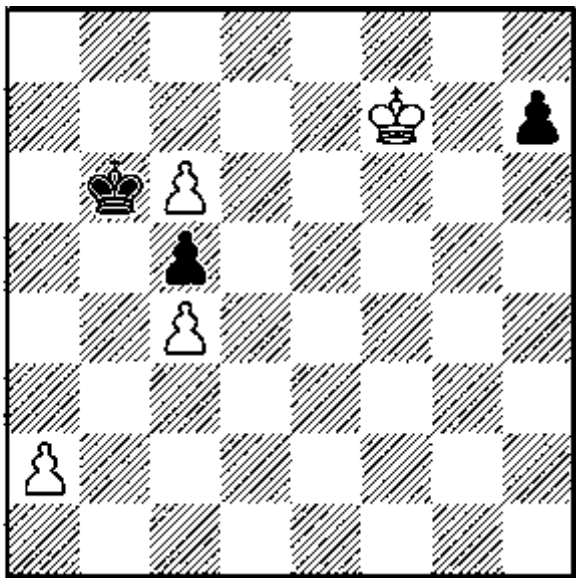
5…Rb7 6 g4! K×g4 7 Ke4 (7 R×e2 Re7+ 8 Kd6 R×e2 9 b5= is also possible) **7…Re7+ 8 Kd5** Draw.

The most characteristic case of "chasing after two birds" is ***Réti's idea***: the king overtakes the hostile passed pawn after initially being out of its square. The necessary tempi are gained by counterthreats (supporting one's own passed pawn or attacking enemy's pieces).

M. Zinar, 1982

15-6

W?



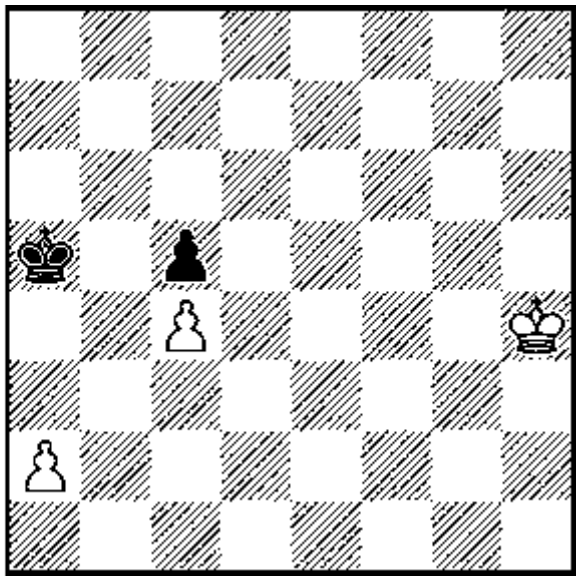
The trivial continuation 1 Kf6? K×c6 2 Kg5 Kb6 3 Kh6 Ka5 4 K×h7 Kb4 5 Kg6 K×c4 6 Kf5 loses. The simplest is 6…Kc3 7 Ke4 c4 8 a4 Kb4–+ here, but 6…Kd5 7 Kf4 (7 a4 c4 8 a5 c3 9 a6 Kc6) 7…Kd4! ("shouldering") is also strong: 8 Kf3 (after 8 a4 c4 9 a5 c3 Black promotes with a check) 8…Kd3! 9 Kf2 (9 a4 c4 10 a5 c3 11 a6 c2 12 a7 c1Q 13 a8Q Qh1+) 9…c4 10 Ke1 Kc2! 11 a4 c3 12 a5 Kb2 13 a6 c2 14 a7 c1Q+.

1 Kg7!! h5 2 Kf6! h4 3 Ke5!

Réti's maneuver! If 3…h3, then 4 Kd6 h2 5 c7=.

3…K×c6 4 Kf4 Kb6 5 Kg4 Ka5 6 K×h4

15-7



B

White has neither gained nor lost a tempo compared with the 1 Kf6? line, but the black pawn, because of its provoked advance, was captured on h4 rather than h7. From there the white king has an easier way back to defend.

6…Kb4 7 Kg3! K×c4 8 Kf2!

8 Kf3(f4)? is wrong because of the shouldering 8…Kd3!, similar to the 1 Kf6? line.

8…Kc3!? 9 Ke2!

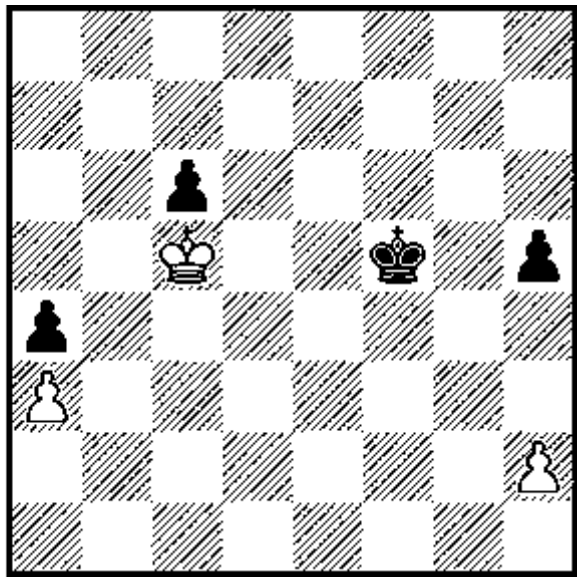
The only move! 9 a4? is premature in view of 9…Kb4, while after 9 Ke3(e1)? c4, the c-pawn promotes with a check.

9…c4 10 a4=.

It is obvious that correct endgame strategy involves not only an activation of one's own king, but the prevention of the activation of the hostile king as well. We have already seen one of standard techniques – ***shouldering*** – in the previous example. Another instructive case follows:

Velea – Vidoniak
Romania 1992

15-8



B?

1…Kg4? leads only to a draw: 2 Kb4! Kh3 3 K×a4 K×h2 4 Kb3! h4 5 a4 h3 6 a5 Kg3 7 a6=. Black's own pawn on c6 turns out to be an obstacle.

1…Ke4!

A move with a double purpose! Generally, the king intends to go to the queenside, but after 2 K×c6 it will change direction: 2…Kf3! 3 Kb5 (3 Kd5 h4 4 Kd4 Kg2 5 Ke3 K×h2 6 Kf3 Kh3–+ –

Black wins because his a-pawn has already entered the hostile half of the board) 3…h4 4 K×a4 Kg2 5 Kb3 K×h2 6 a4 Kg3 7 a5 h3, and White fails to queen his pawn because the c6-pawn does not exist anymore.

As Bologan has shown, 1…h4! also wins: 2 Kb4 Ke4 (2…c5+) 3 K×a4 c5 4 Kb5 Kd4 5 a4 c4 6 a5 c3 7 a6 c2 8 a7 c1Q, and after 9 a8Q, almost every check forces a queen exchange. Or 4 Kb3 Kd3 5 Kb2 (the defensive technique that we call "pendulum" does not help here) 5…c4 6 Kc1 Kc3–+ (the same situation as in the 2 K×c6 Kf3 3 Kd5 line, but with reversed wings).

2 h4!? Kd3 3 Kb4

3 K×c6 Kc4!–+ (shouldering), rather than 3…Kc3? 4 Kd5 Kb3 5 Kd4 K×a3 6 Kc3=.

3…Kd4 4 K×a4 Kc4

Shouldering again; the white king is being squeezed to the edge of the board. 4…c5? is wrong in view of 5 Kb3 Kd3 6 Kb2 Kd2 (6…c4 7 Kc1 Kc3 8 a4 Kb4 9 Kc2=) 7 Kb3= (a pendulum).

5 Ka5 c5 6 Kb6 Kd4 7 a4 c4 8 a5 c3 9 a6 c2 10 a7 c1Q 11 a8Q Qc5+

White resigned. After the inevitable queen exchange, his king is too far away from the kingside.

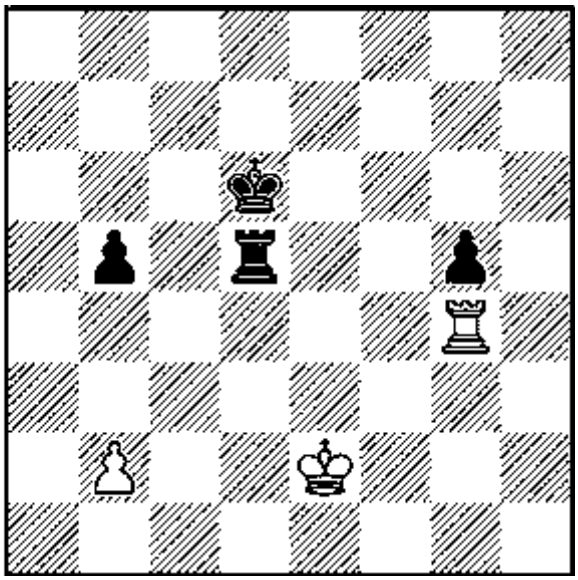
A king can be kept out of strategically important areas not only by the hostile king but by other pieces as well. A rook can ***cut the king off***, while other pieces can ***create a barrier*** (usually together with pawns).

Ljubojevic – Xie Jun

Novi Sad ol 1990

15-9

B?



1…Rf5!–+

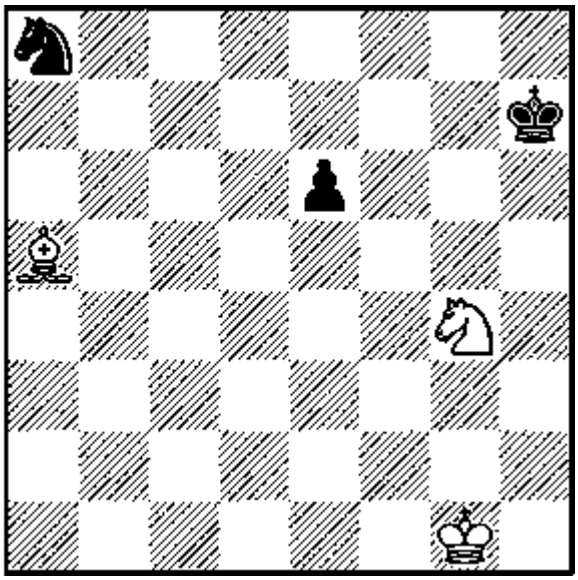
The most precise, as the white king will be unable to help his rook in its fight against the passed pawn, which will soon march unstoppably ahead with support from its own king.

2 Ke3 Ke5 3 b3 Kf6 4 Ke4 Kg6 5 Rg1 Rf4+ 6 Ke5 Rb4 7 Rg3 g4 (the king is cut off from the pawn along the rank now) **8 Kd5 Rf4 9 Kc5 b4 10 Kb5 Kg5 11 Rg1 Kh4 12 Rh1+ Kg3 13 Kc5 Kg2** White resigned.

A. & K. Sarychev, 1930

15-10

W?



The a8-knight is under arrest, but the black king hopes to release it, for example, after 1 Kf2? Kg6 2 Ke3 Kf5 3 Nf2 Ke5 4 Kd3 Kd6 and 5…Nc7=.

1 Ne5! Kg7 (△ 2…Kf6) **2 Bd8!**

White has built a barrier. The black king can still overcome it, but only at a cost of time and this loss of time turns out to be decisive.

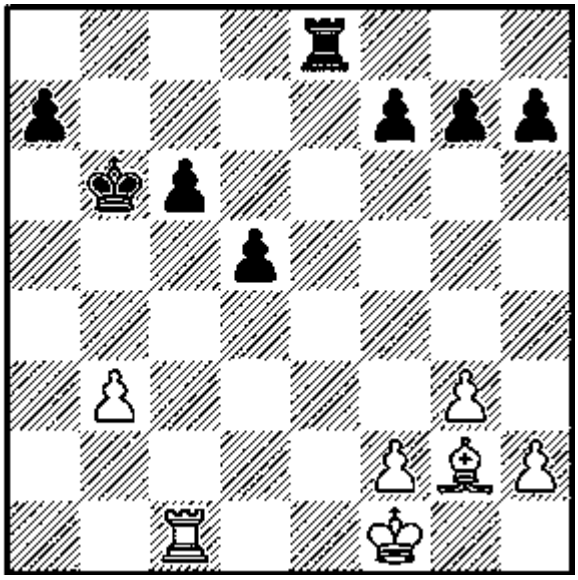
2…Kf8 3 Kf2 Ke8 4 Ba5 Ke7 5 Ke3 Kd6 6 Kd4⊙ Nc7 (6…Ke7 7 Kc5+–) **7 Bb4#**.

Another technique of immobilization is ***pawns in the crosshairs***: the king is compelled to defend its own pawns.

Tukmakov – Veingold
USSR 1979

15-11

W?



Black has only two pawns for a bishop, but for White to capitalize on his advantage is by no means simple. How should he proceed? His king is out of play; therefore 1 Re1 looks quite natural, but after 1…R×e1+ 2 K×e1 Kc5 3 Kd2 Kd4, followed by …a7-a5 and …c6-c5, Black's king is active. The corner square h8 is of the "wrong" color and this fact will be important in case of massive pawn exchanges.

Sofia Polgar suggested a promising plan: 1 b4!? followed by Ra1 (or Rc5-a5), Bf3-e2, Ra6+ and b4-b5. Tukmakov has found another plan: he still exchanged the rooks but in a more favorable way.

1 Bh3! (2 Bd7 is threatened) **1…Re7**

The advance 1…c5?! just weakens Black's position, offering new possibilities to the white bishop: 2 Bg2 d4 (2…Re5 3 f4; 2…Rd8 3 Ke2) 3 Bd5+–.

2 Re1! R×e1+

Tougher resistance was possible after 2…Rb7 3 Ke2 Kc5(c7); White probably should have then played the sharp 4 Ra1 or 4 Kd2.

3 K×e1 Kc5 4 Bd7!+–

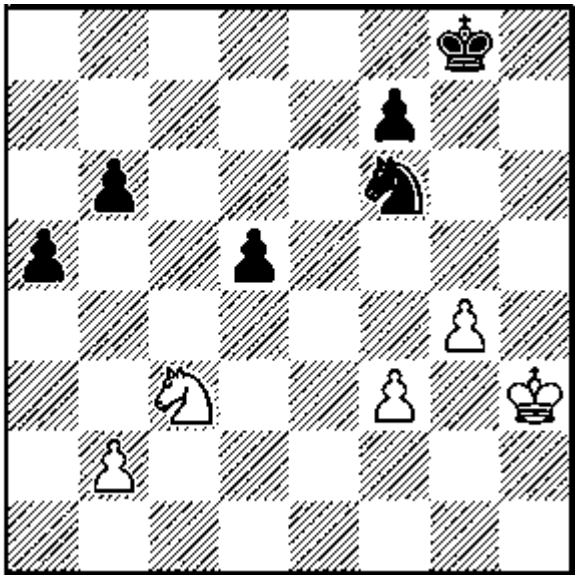
This is the point! By keeping the c-pawn in the crosshairs, White has prevented the activation of the black king. The rest is a rather simple process.

4…a5 5 Kd2 Kd6 6 Be8 f6 7 h4 c5 8 Bf7 Ke5 9 Ke3 h6 10 f4+ Kd6 11 h5 c4 (otherwise the white king goes to the a5-pawn) **12 bc a4 13 Kd4 dc 14 K×c4** Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Bronstein – Bareev
Rome 1990

15-12



W?

White could easily equalize by activating his king, in spite of his pawn minus: 1 Kg3! d4 (1…Kg7 2 Kf4 ∆ Ke5) 2 Nb5 d3 3 Kf2=.

Bronstein was an outstanding grandmaster, but his Achilles' heel was always his endgame technique. For example, when he drew the world championship match against Botvinnik in 1951 (12:12), he lost 5 games – three of them from absolutely drawn endgames.

Here he also commits an elementary technical error, forgetting to centralize his king at the proper moment.

1 g5? d4! 2 Nb5 (2 gf dc 3 bc a4) **2…d3! 3 Kg3**

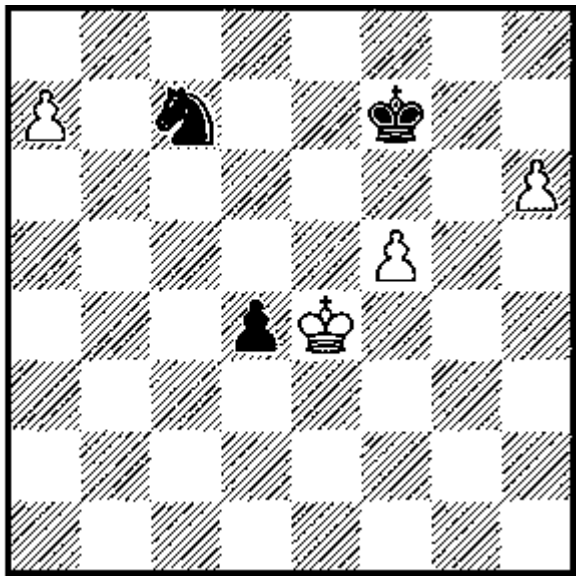
After 3 gf d2 4 Nc3 b5! 5 Kg3 b4 6 Nd1 a4 7 Kf2 a3, the a-pawn promotes.

3…d2

White resigned. The finish could be 4 Nc3 Nd5! 5 Nd1 Kg7 6 f4 (6 Kf2 Kg6 7 Ke2 K×g5 8 K×d2 Kf4, and Black has an extra pawn and the much more active king) 6…b5 7 Kf3 b4 8 Ke2 (8 f5 a4) 8…N×f4+ 9 K×d2 Kg6–+.

Svidler – Anand
Dos Hermanas 1999

15-13



W?

In this position a draw was agreed. Meanwhile, White had a forced win:

1 K×d4! Nb5+ 2 Kc5 N×a7 3 Kb6!

Chasing after two birds! By pursuing the knight, White wants to bring the king closer to his pawns.

3…Nc8+ 4 Kc7 Na7

If 4…Ne7, then 5 h7 Kg7 6 f6+!.

5 Kd7! Nb5

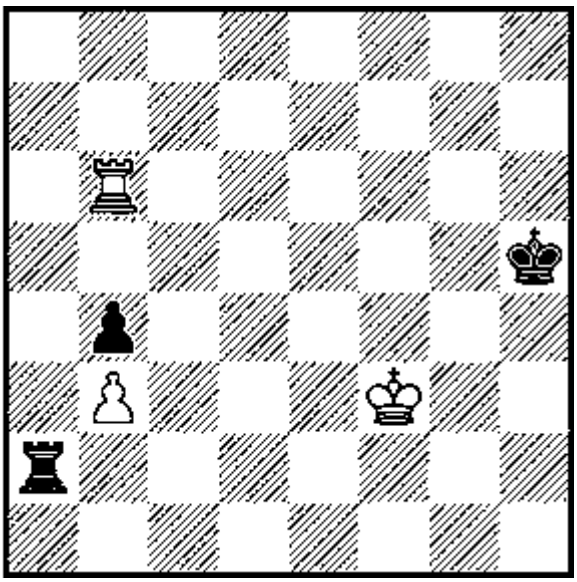
Or 5…Kf6 6 h7 Kg7 7 f6+ K×h7 8 f7 Kg7 9 Ke8!+–.

6 h7 Kg7 7 f6+ K×h7 8 f7 Kg7 9 Ke7!+–.

Ricardi – Valerga

San Martin 1995

15-14



B?

1…Kg5??

Apparently logical – the king goes to the queenside. However, in this case restricting the hostile king was much more important. This could has been achieved by 1…Rh2! 2 R×b4 (2 Ke4 Rh3! and White cannot take the pawn) 2…Rh3+ 3 Ke2 Kg5 (only now, when the white king is cut off along the third rank, has the time come to bring the king closer) 4 Kd2 Kf5 5 Kc2 Ke5 6 Rc4 Rh8 (in order to apply the frontal attack technique) with an easy draw.

2 Ke4 Rh2 3 Kd5! Kf5 (3…Rh4 4 Kc5 Kf5 5 R×b4 is no better) **4 R×b4**

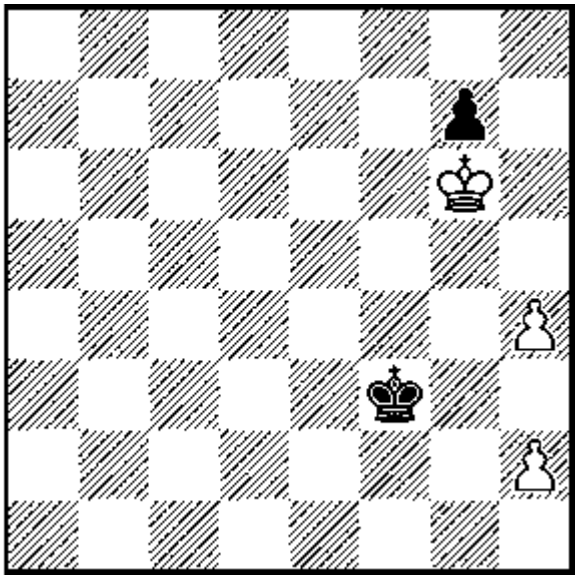
White's king is comfortably placed in the center and prevents its counterpart from coming closer.

4…Rh3 (4…Rh8 5 Rb6+–) **5 Rb7 Rd3+ 6 Kc4 Rd8 7 b4 Ke6 8 Kc5 Rc8+ 9 Kb6** Black

resigned.

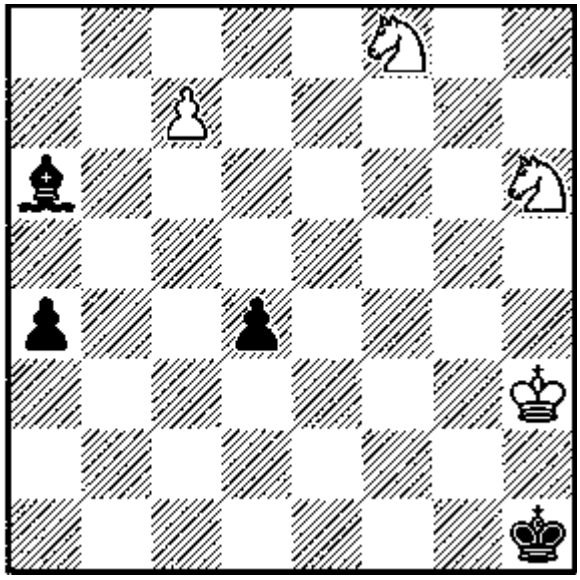
Exercises

15-15



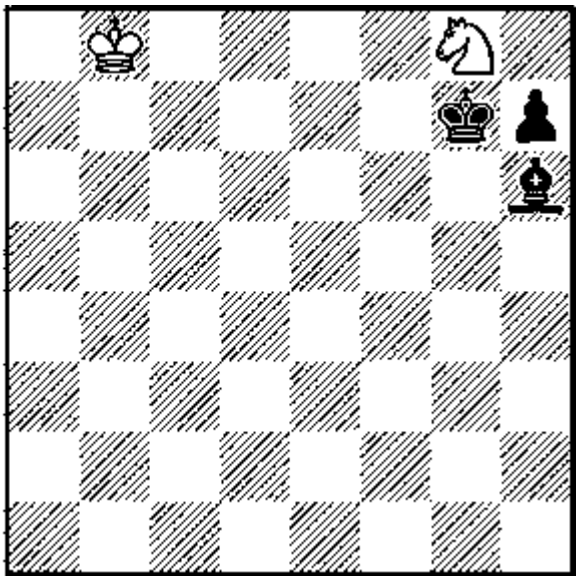
15/1
W?

15-16



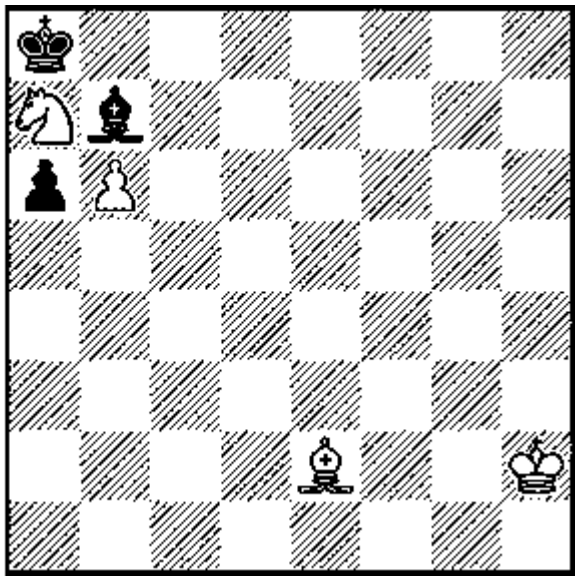
15/2
W?

15-17



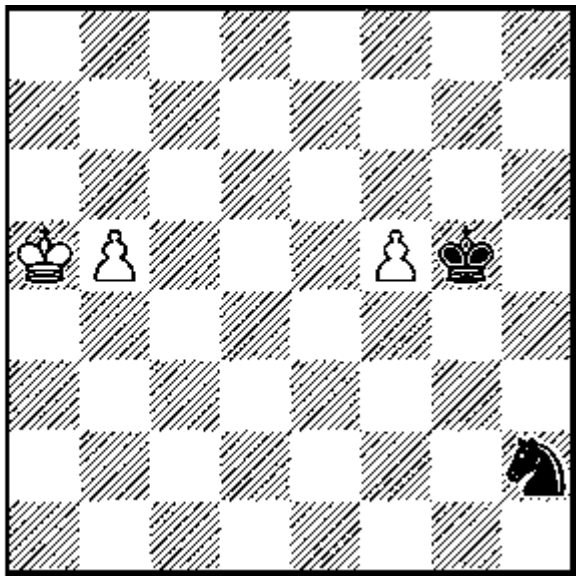
15/3
W?

15-18



15/4
W?

15-19



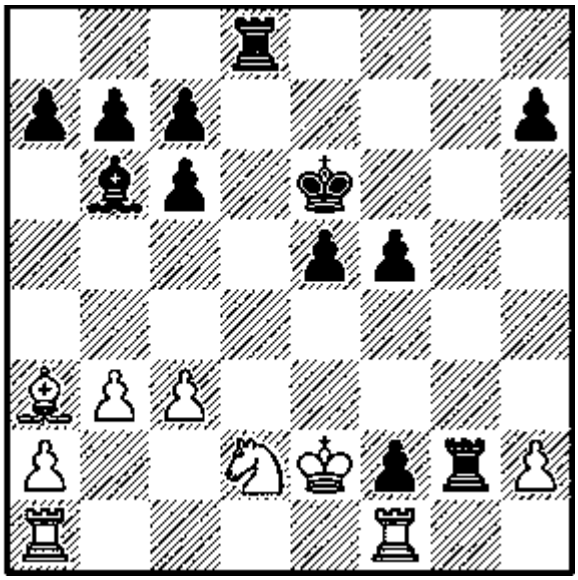
15/5
W?/Play

Pawn Power

In middlegames, with many pieces in play, pawns can seldom be promoted. In endgames, however, the main issue is usually the creation of passed pawns and their advancement to promotion. Therefore, the importance of pawns increases in endgames; they become more valuable fighting units, sometimes as strong as pieces or even much stronger.

Gufeld – Kavalek
Marianske Lazne tt jr 1962

15-20



B

Black obviously stands better but he must be aware of the move Nc4. After an exchange of the b6-bishop, the important f2-pawn will be lost. To maintain it, Kavalek decides on an exchange sacrifice, intuitively sensing that his pawns will be stronger than the white rook.

1…R×d2+!!

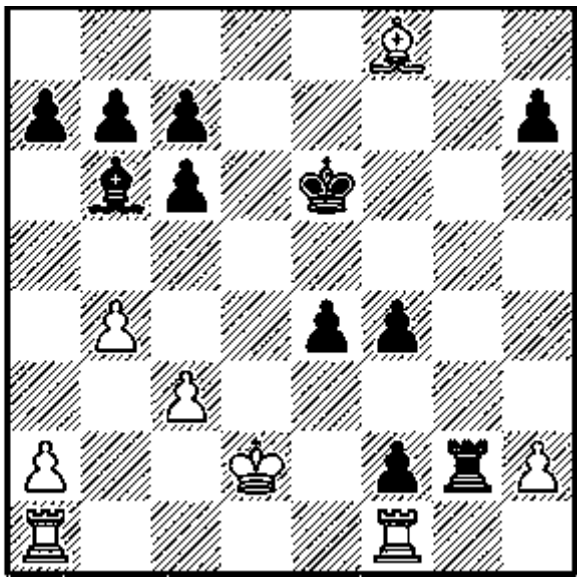
Emms suggested another solution to the problem: 1…e4! 2 Nc4 (2 Rad1 Rd3! 3 Nc4 Rg1 is no better) 2…f4 3 N×b6 f3+ 4 Ke3 Kf5! (this zwischenzug is the point: 5…Rd3# is threatened) 6 Rad1 R×d1 7 R×d1 Rg1! 8 K×f2 R×d1 9 Nc4 Ra1 with an easy win.

2 K×d2 e4 3 Bf8

The following curious line, also by Emms, shows the mighty energy of connected passed pawns: 3 h4 f4 4 c4 Bd4 5 Rad1 f3 6 Kc2 e3 7 R×d4 e2 8 Rdd1 Rg1! 9 R×g1 fgQ 10 R×g1 f2–+.

3…f4 4 b4!

15-21



B?

4…Rg5!!

White has prepared 5 Bc5 in order to interfere with the powerful b6-bishop. To prevent this, Kavalek sacrifices another exchange.

4…e3+ looks tempting, and if 5 Ke2, then 5…Kf5 (△ 6…Ke4) 6 Kf3 R×h2 (△ 7…Rh3+) 7 Rh1 e2! 8 K×e2 f1Q+! 9 K×f1 R×h1+ (Bologan). However White has a better defense: 5 Kd3! f3 6 c4! e2 7 c5 R×h2 (7…Rg1? 8 R×g1 fgQ 9 R×g1 f2 fails to 10 Rg6+! hg 11 K×e2) 8 Bg7! (8…Kf7 was threatened) with an eventual draw.

5 Bc5 R×c5! 6 bc B×c5 7 Rab1 f3

An amazing position! A bishop with pawns turns out to be stronger than a pair of rooks. For example, if 8 Rh1, then 8…Ke5 9 R×b7 e3+ 10 Kd3 e2 11 Rbb1 Be7! 12 Ke3 Bh4 and 13…e1Q.

8 Rb4 Kf5 9 Rd4

The bishop is finally neutralized, but now the black king enters with decisive effect.

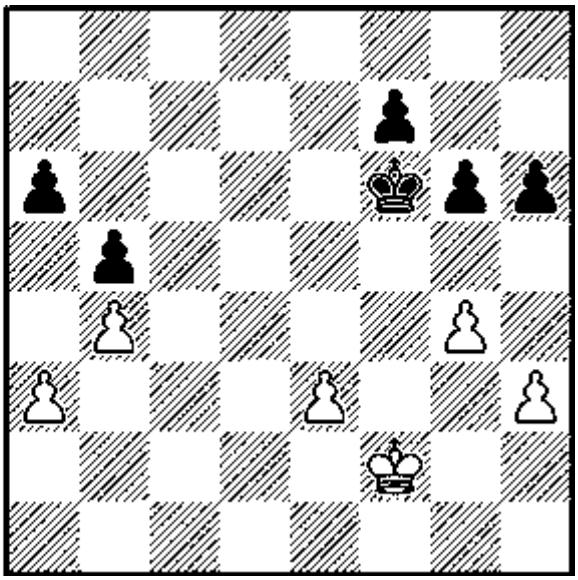
9…B×d4 10 cd Kf4! White resigned.

This example demonstrates how dangerous ***connected passed pawns*** can be. In many endings, a ***distant passed pawn*** can be also very important. Fighting against it can be a difficult matter, and even if one succeeds in stopping it, one often loses control of events on the opposite wing. The possibility of creating a distant passed pawn can often be of decisive importance in evaluating a position.

Lutikov – Gulko
Moscow 1982

15-22

W?



White's only way to a draw was 1 e4! Ke5 (1…Kg5 2 Kg3 △ 3 h4+) 2 Kf3! (rather than 2 Ke3? g5 3 Kd3 Kf4 4 Kd4 Kg3 5 Ke5 K×h3 6 Kf6 K×g4–+) 2…g5 (2…Kd4 3 Kf4=; 2…h5 3 gh gh 4 Ke3=) 3 Ke3 f6 4 Kd3 Kf4 5 Kd4 Kg3 6 Kd5 K×h3 7 Ke6 K×g4 8 K×f6=.

This variation is probably rather hard to calculate. An easier task is to come to the conclusion that nothing else is promising. For example, after 1 h4? Ke5 2 Kf3 both 2…g5 and 2…f5!? win for Black, e.g. 3 gf (3 g5 h5–+) 3…K×f5, creating a distant passed pawn.

1 Kf3? Kg5!

Again, the evaluation is rather obvious. After 2 Kg3 f5! 3 gf K×f5 or 3 h4+ Kf6, Black gets a distant passed pawn; otherwise he brings his king to h4, and thereafter widens the beachhead with decisive effect.

2 e4 Kh4 3 Kg2 f6!

3…g5? is erroneous in view of 4 e5=. As Naumann has discovered, 3…h5!? 4 gh K×h5 also wins, although the process is more complicated than in the actual game: 5 Kg3 f6 6 h4 g5 7 hg fg (Black has got a distant passed pawn) 8 e5 Kh6! (the g6 and g4 squares are mined) 9 Kf3 Kg7 10 Ke4 Kg6! 11 Kd5 Kf7!.

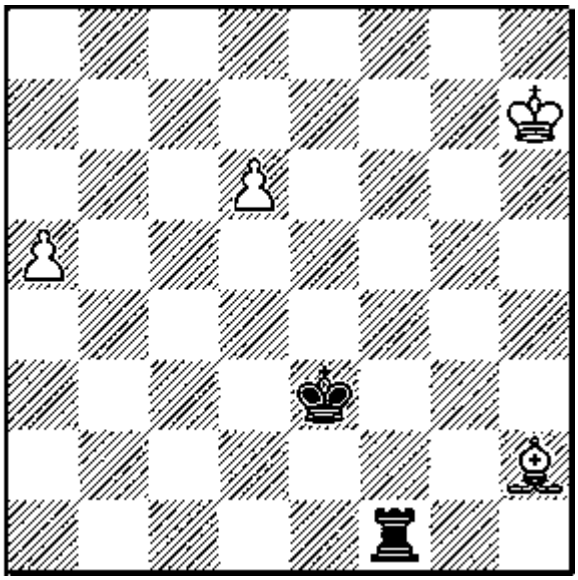
4 Kh2 h5 5 gh K×h5 6 Kg3 g5⊙ 7 Kh2 Kh4 (7…g4? 8 Kg3=) **8 Kg2 g4** White resigned.

Far-advanced passed pawns are pre-conditions for brilliant combinations based on the promotion idea.

D. Gurgenidze, L. Mitrofanov, 1987

15-23

W?



1 a6! Ra1!

1…Rf8 meets an easier refutation: 2 a7 Ke4 (2…Ra8 3 d7 R×a7 4 Bg1+) 3 d7 Rd8 4 Kg6 (or 4 Bc7 R×d7+ 5 Kg6). But what should White do now? 2 d7? Rd1= is useless.

2 Bg1+!! R×g1 3 Kh8!!

An amazing, quiet move. If 3…Ra1(c1), 4 d7 decides, if 3…Rd1(b1), then 4 a7, and if 3…Rf1, then 4 Kg8!.

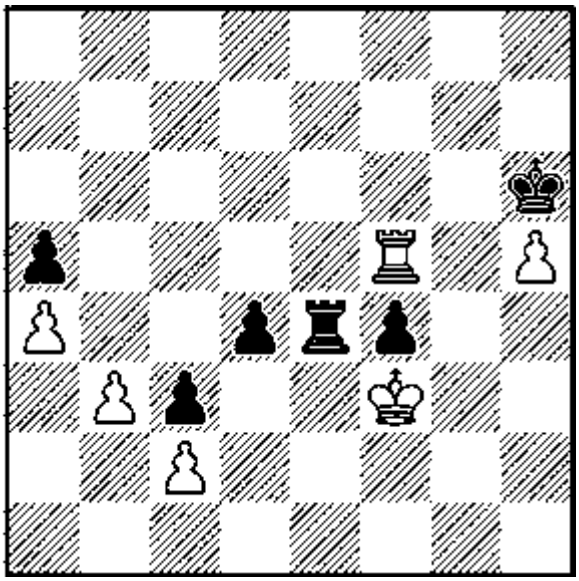
3…Rh1+ 4 Kg8! Rg1+ 5 Kf8 Rh1 (5…Rf1+ 6 Ke8) **6 d7**+–.

Interference and deflection are standard tactical tools that are helpful for pawn promotion.

Muñoz – Salazar
Novi Sad ol 1990

15-24

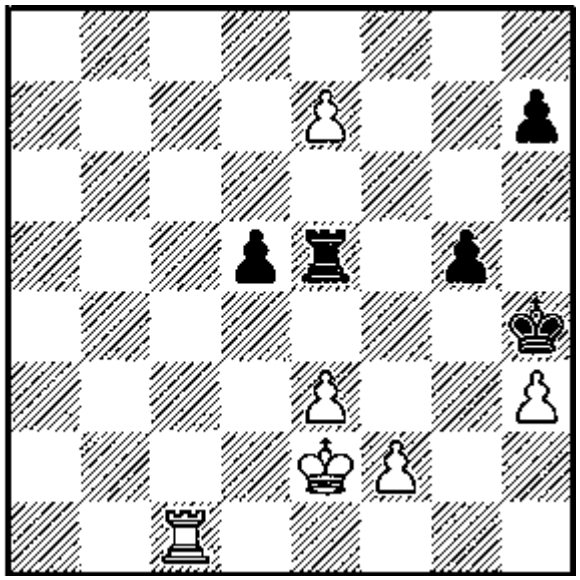
B?



1…d3! 2 cd (2 K×e4 dco) **2…Rc4!!** (an interference) **3 bc c2 4 K×f4 c1Q+ 5 Ke4 Qd1** White resigned.

L. Katsnelson, A. Maksimovskikh, 1983

15-25



W

1 Rc7

With the threat 2 e8Q R×e8 3 R×h7#. After 1…h5 2 Kd3 Re4 (otherwise 3 Kd4 wins easily), both 3 f3 Re6 4 f4! gf 5 ef Re4 6 Rb7⊙ K×h3 7 f5 and 3 Rc4!! are decisive. The nice deflection is the main theme of this study; we shall meet it more than once below.

1…K×h3

2 Kd3? gives nothing now: 2…Re4 3 f3 Re6=, and a king advance will cost White the important e3-pawn.

2 f4!! gf 3 Kf3 R×e3+ (3…fe 4 e8Q! R×e8 5 R×h7#) **4 K×f4 Re4+**

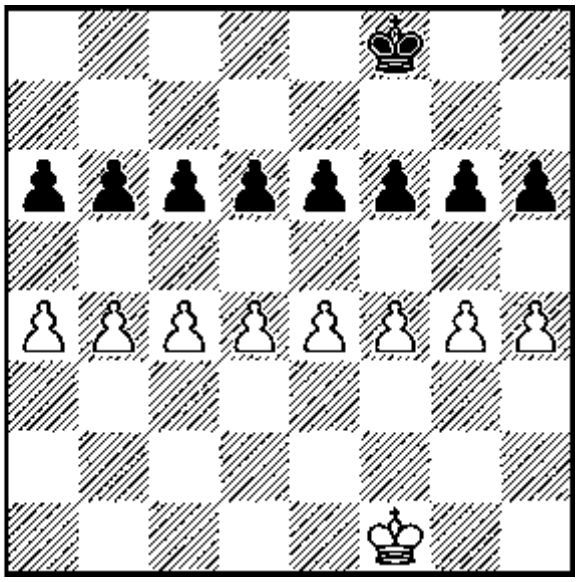
If 4…d4, then 5 Rc3!! R×c3 6 e8Q+–. On 4…Re1, White applies the interference 5 Rc3+ and 6 Re3.

5 Kf3! h5 (5…Kh2 6 Rc2+ and 7 Re2+–) **6 Rc1! Kh4** (6…Kh2 7 Rc2+) **7 Rc4!!**+–.

If there is no passed pawn, one can often create it by means of a pawn **breakthrough**. The following joke illustrates one of the standard breakthrough techniques.

P. Cathignol, 1981

15-26



W?

1 d5! ed 2 ed cd

No different is 2…c5 3 a5 ba 4 b5! ab 5 cb etc., as in the main line.

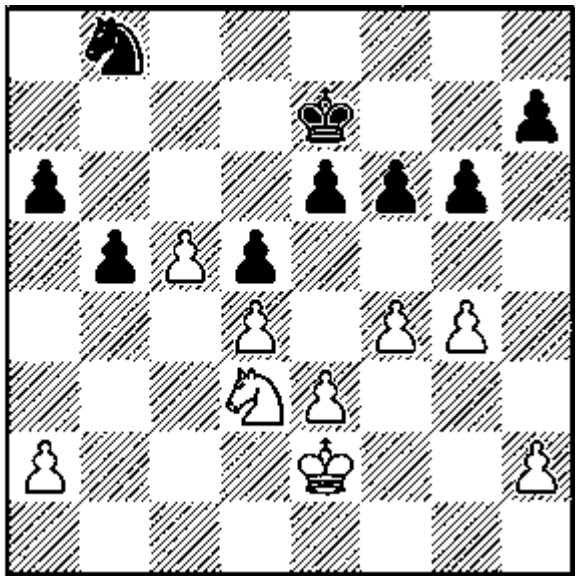
3 a5! ba 4 b5! ab 5 cb Ke7 6 b6 Kd7 7 b7 Kc7 8 g5! fg 9 h5! gh 10 f5 a4 11 f6 a3 12 f7 a2 13 b8Q+! K×b8 14 f8Q+.

Sometimes a pawn breakthrough is an elementary tactical tool which is immediately decisive. But this is not a fixed rule; sometimes a breakthrough results in sharp positions that require deep

and precise calculation.

Pillsbury – Gunsberg
Hastings 1895

15-27



W?

1 f5! (this is not a breakthrough, but an undermining of Black's central pawns) **1…g5!**

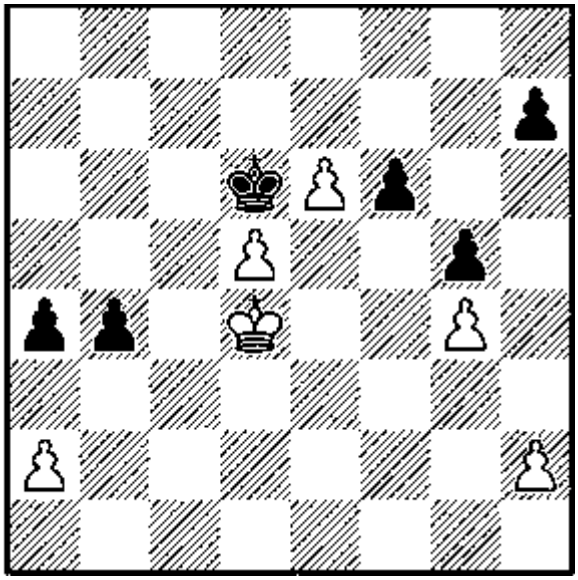
Forced, in view of the murderous threat 2 Nf4. A very promising breakthrough can be found without much effort now, but to calculate it accurately is much harder work. The main line is more than 20 moves long! An additional question, for those who would like to try finding the solution independently: does White's combination work, if the h2-pawn is moved to h3?

2 Nb4!! a5 3 c6! Kd6! 4 fe! N×c6

Of course, not 4…ab? 5 e7 K×e7 6 c7+–.

5 N×c6 K×c6 6 e4! de 7 d5+ Kd6 8 Ke3 b4 9 K×e4 a4 10 Kd4

15-28



B

10…Ke7!

The best defense: Black prepares his own breakthrough on the kingside. The continuation in the actual game was much weaker: 10…h5?? 11 gh a3 12 Kc4 f5 13 h6 f4 14 h7 and Black resigned.

11 Kc4 b3 12 ab a3 13 Kc3 f5! 14 gf h5 15 b4 a2 16 Kb2 g4 17 b5 h4 18 b6 g3 19 hg hg 20 d6+! K×d6 21 b7 Kc7 22 e7 g2 23 b8Q+! K×b8 24 e8Q+

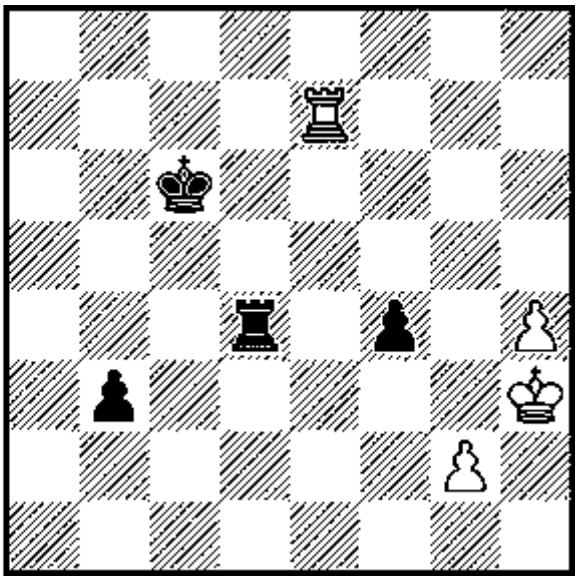
If the pawn had stood on h3, Black would have created the passed pawn a move earlier; hence White would have lost the game rather than won it.

Tragicomedies

Morozevich – van Wely
Tilburg 1993

15-29

B?



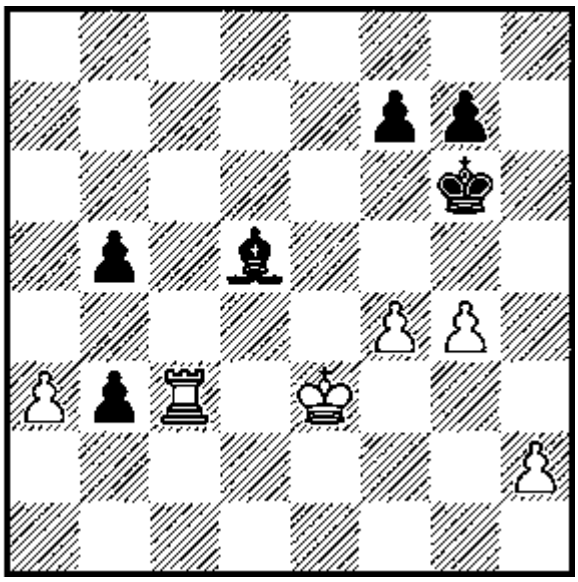
After 1…Rd3+! 2 Kg4 Re3!, the b-pawn would have had inevitably promoted, and which White's rook could not have prevented.

The actual continuation was **1…b2? 2 Re1 Rb4 3 Rb1** Draw.

Gelfand – Lautier
Belgrade 1997

15-30

W



White could have won easily after 1 Kd2 or 1 Rc1.

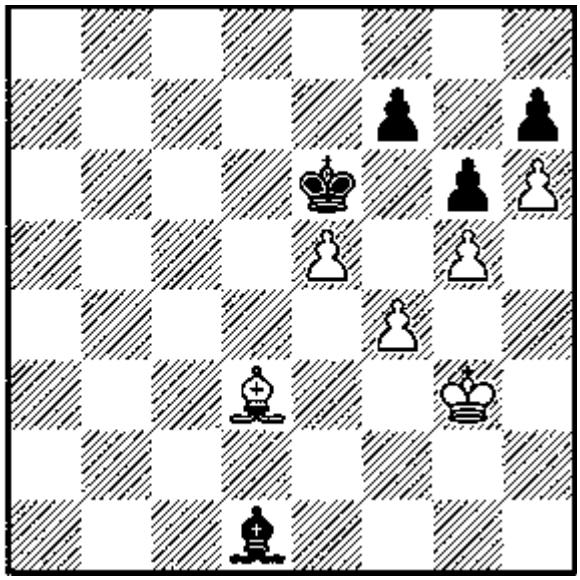
1 Rc5??

An extremely grave error. White is on the losing side now: 1…b4!! 2 R×d5 (2 ab b2; 2 Kd2 ba 3 Kc1 b2+) 2…ba 3 Kd2 a2–+.

1…Bc4?? 2 Kd2 Black resigned.

Timoshchenko – Stephenson
Hastings 1966

15-31

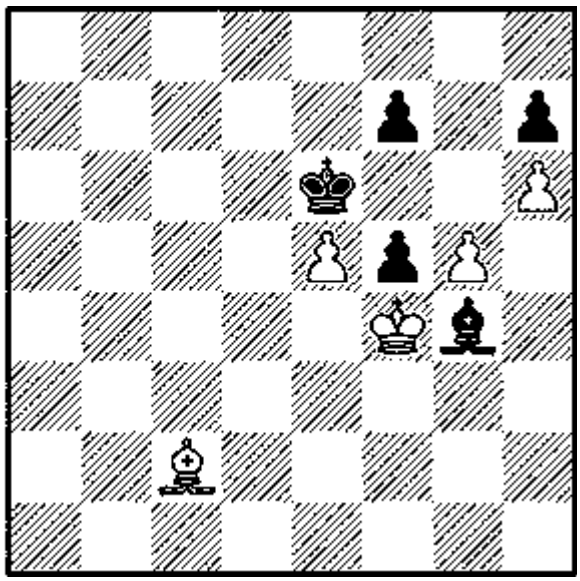


W?

1 f5+! gf (1…K×e5 2 fg fg 3 B×g6+–) **2 Kf4 Bg4 3 Bc2?**

Timoshchenko planned a bishop sacrifice on f7 followed by a breakthrough by one of his pawns to the promotion square. He saw that the immediate 3 Bc4+ Ke7 4 B×f7? K×f7 5 e6+ fails to 5…Kg8! 6 g6 Bh5!=, and decided to play for a zugzwang, making a waiting move. His idea worked successfully in the actual game:

15-32



B?

3…Bh3? 4 Bb3+ Ke7 5 B×f7! K×f7 6 e6+ Kf8 (6…Kg8 7 e7! Kf7 8 g6+) **7 g6** (7 e7+) **7…hg 8 e7+** Black resigned.

However Black could have saved the game by means of 3…Ke7!. The pawn ending is then drawn: 4 B×f5 B×f5 5 K×f5 Ke8! 6 Kf6 Kf8 7 g6 (the only possible attempt) 7…fg 8 e6 g5! 9 K×g5 Ke7 10 Kf5 Ke8 11 Kf6 Kf8 12 e7+ Ke8 13 Kg7 K×e7 14 K×h7 Kf7=. 4 Bb3 is met with 4…Bh5 5 K×f5 (or 5 Bc4 Bg6!) 5…Bg6+ 6 Kf4 Bb1=.

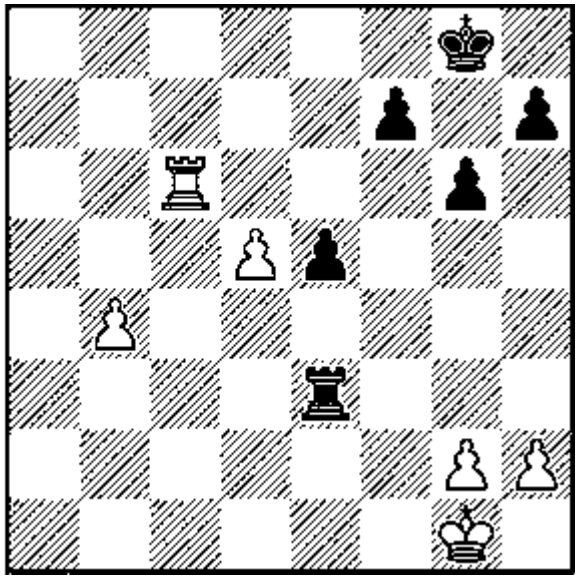
Another drawing continuation is 4 g6 fg 5 Bb3 Kf8! 6 Kg5 Bh3! 7 Be6 (7 Kf6 f4 8 e6 B×e6 9 B×e6 f3 10 Bd5 f2 11 Bc4 f1Q+ 12 B×f1 Kg8=) 7…Bf1! (rather than 7…Bg4? 8 Kf6 Bd1 9 Bf7+– or 8…Bh3 9 Bc8! Kg8 10 e6 f4 11 e7+–) 8 Kf6 f4 9 Bf7 Bh3 10 B×g6 f3 11 B×h7 f2 12 Bd3 Kg8=.

This last line offers a clue to the correct solution: the breakthrough g5-g6 should be played immediately, when the black king is farther from the f8-square.

3 g6!! (or 3 Bc4+ Ke7 4 g6!!) 3…fg 4 Bc4+ Ke7 5 Bg8. Black is helpless, for example: 5…Bd1 6 B×h7 Kf7 7 Kg5 Bb3 (7…Bh5 8 B×g6+ B×g6 9 e6+) 8 B×g6+ Kg8 9 B×f5 Kh8 10 Kf6 Bc4 11 Bg6 Bb3 (11…Kg8 12 Bf7+!) 12 Bf7 Ba4 13 e6 Kh7 14 Kg5! Bb3 15 Bg6+ Kh8 16 e7 Ba4 17 Kf6 followed with Ke5-d6- c7-d8, Bf5-d7 (Dvoretsky).

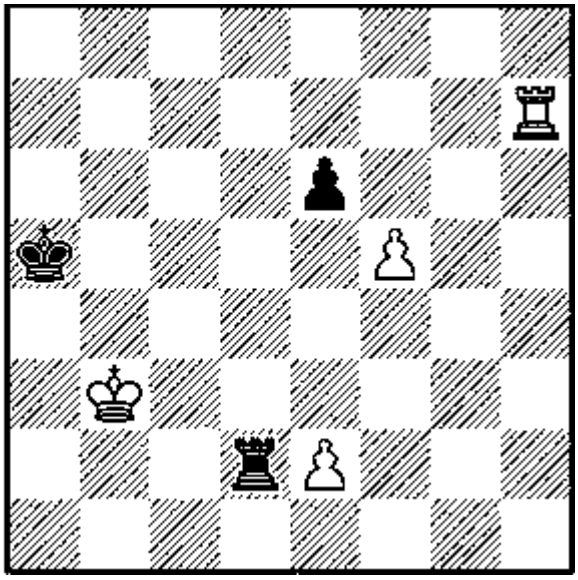
Exercises

15-33



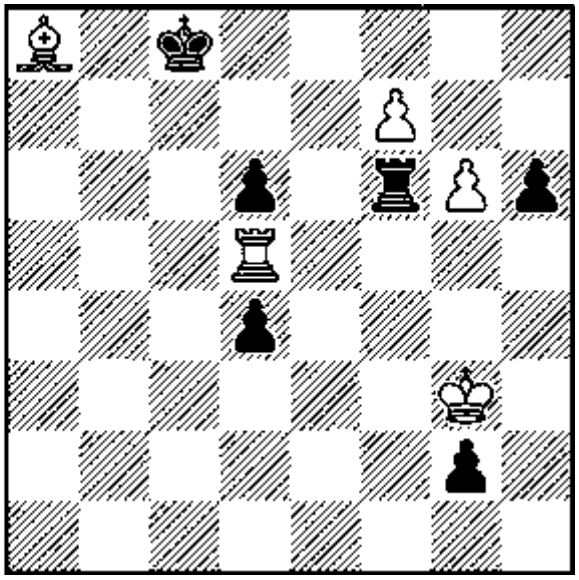
15/6
W?

15-34



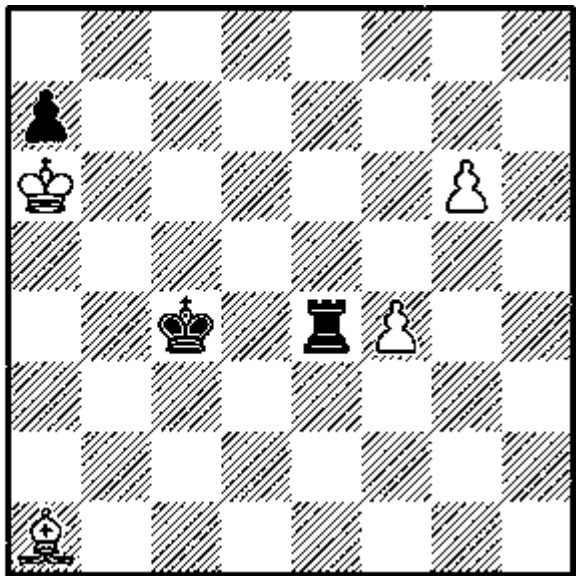
15/7
W?

15-35



15/8
W?

15-36



15/9
W?/Play

Zugzwang

Zugzwang is a situation in which each possible move worsens one's position.

Zugzwang is one of the most important endgame tools. It is applicable everywhere: in elementary endgames such as "king and pawn versus king" or "king and rook versus king" (in the latter case, the checkmating process cannot be successful without a zugzwang technique), as well as in the most complicated situations which require deep and precise calculation, where the pros and cons of every move may not be quite evident.

Zugzwang is very often reciprocal; both sides try to come to a certain position with the opponent on move. ***Squares of the reciprocal zugzwang are called "corresponding squares."***

The simplest cases of corresponding squares are: ***opposition*** (a correspondence of kings on a file, or rank, or sometimes a diagonal; ***mined squares*** (a pair of corresponding squares); ***triangle*** – a maneuver with the purpose ceding the move to the opponent.

In creating and handling zugzwang situations, ***spare tempi*** can be vitally important. To this end, it is often useful to keep pawns on their initial positions, in order to have a choice between moving one or two squares when a critical situation arises ("***the Steinitz rule***").

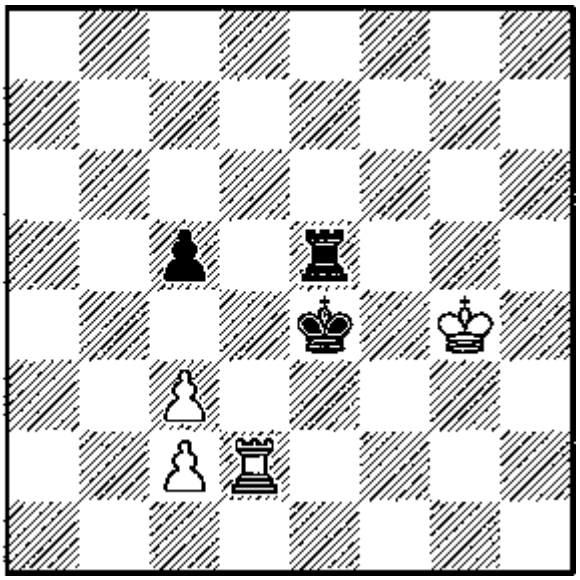
All this is undoubtedly well-known to you from the previous chapters. Here we will only take some practical exercise with these ideas.

Zugzwang, whether it has already occurred or can occur soon, is not always evident. Therefore, when seeking a way to your objective, you should ***remember to ask yourselves: how would your opponent play if he were on move?*** This question should be addressed not only to the actual position, but also to positions that arise in calculated lines.

A. Seleznev, 1923

15-37

W?



Let us first try the rook exchange: 1 Re2+? Kd5 2 R×e5+ K×e5 3 Kf3 Kd5 4 Ke3 Kc4 5 Kd2 Kd5 6 Kd3 c4+ 7 Ke3 Ke5 – a draw, because Black maintains the opposition.

The consequences of 1 c4? are harder to calculate. Black plays 1…Ke3 2 Rd3+ Ke2 (3…Re4+ is threatened) 3 Kf4 Rh5 4 Ke4 Rg5. So how do we strengthen the position? White can get the d5-square for his king by means of 5 Rd6 Rh5 6 Re6 Kd2 7 Re5, but after 7…Rh4+ 8 Kd5 K×c2 9 K×c5 Kd3 10 Rd5+ Kc3, his last pawn is lost.

But what if Black is on move? He will naturally play 1…Ke3, but White can easily prevent it by moving his rook away. All Black's other moves will only worsen his position.

1 Rd1!⊙ Re6

He cannot play 1…Ke3? 2 Re1+, while after 1…c4, White wins by means of 2 Re1+ Kd5 3 R×e5+ K×e5 4 Kg5! (flank opposition) 4…Ke4 5 Kf6+– (outflanking).

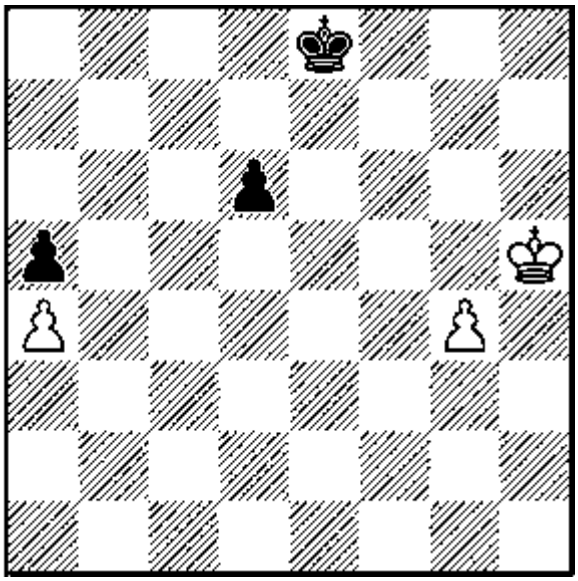
2 Re1+ Kd5 3 c4+! Kd6 4 R×e6+ K×e6 5 Kf4 Kf6 6 Ke4 Ke6 7 c3⊙+–

Finally, the decisive factor was White's spare tempo that had arisen during the earlier fight.

R. Réti, 1923

15-38

W?



One should discover the mined squares here: these are g6 and e7. Actually, in case of 1 Kg6? Ke7!⊙ 2 Kf5 Kf7⊙, White would win if the d6-pawn did not exist, or if it stood on d5. In the chapter on pawn endings, we learned to evaluate these situations instantaneously: the queenside pawns are in the "normal" position while the kingside gives White an extra tempo because his king stands in front of the pawn. But with the pawn on d6 it is a draw because White must spend a tempo capturing it: 3 Ke4 Kg6 4 Kd5 Kg5 5 K×d6 K×g4 6 Kc6 Kf5 7 Kb6 Ke6 8 K×a5 Kd7 9 Kb6 Kc8=. Or 2 g5 d5 3 Kh7 (3 Kf5 Kf7= leads to the "normal" position – the white king stands

aside the pawn) 3…d4 4 g6 d3 5 g7 d2 6 g8Q d1Q=.

1 Kh6? does not win either: 1…Kf7 2 Kh7 Kf6 3 Kh6 Kf7 (“pendulum”) 4 g5 (4 Kg5 Kg7 5 Kf5 Kf7=) 4…Kg8 5 Kg6 d5 6 Kf5 Kg7= (the “normal” position again).

1 Kg5! Kf7 (1…d5 2 Kf5+–) **2 Kf5⊙ Ke7 3 Kg6!**

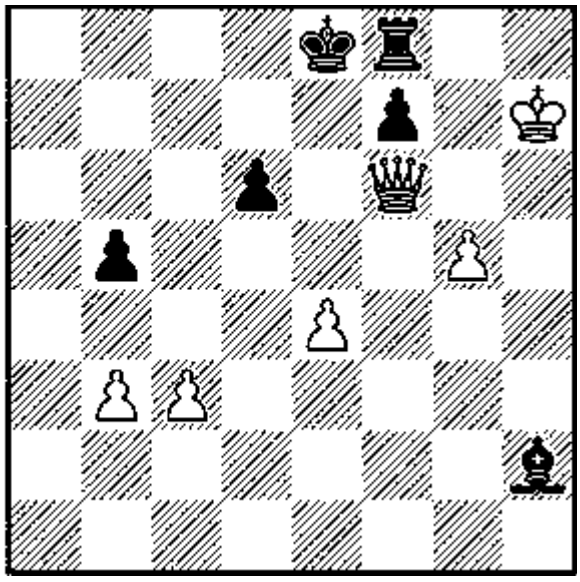
The decisive zugzwang! If 3…Ke6, then 4 g5 d5 5 Kh7 d4 6 g6+–.

3…d5 4 Kf5 Kf7 (4…Kd6 5 g5+–) **5 Ke5**+–.

R. Réti, 1928

15-39

W?



White has a material advantage but his king is badly placed. 1 g6? is wrong in view of 1…Be5.

After 1 Kg7? Be5, White is in zugzwang: 2 c4? B×f6+ 3 gf b4⊙–+; if 2 b4, then 2…Bh2(g3). The same position would be reached, but with Black on move, so White adopts a triangulating maneuver with his king.

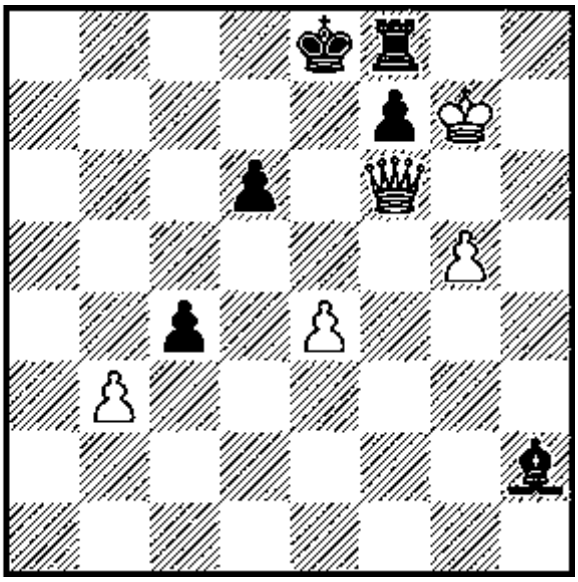
1 Kh6! (Kh5-g4 is threatened) **1…Be5 2 Kg7! Bh2**

After 2…B×f6+ 3 gf, Black is in zugzwang; he loses in spite of his extra rook.

3 c4 bc (3…b4 4 c5+–)

15-40

W?



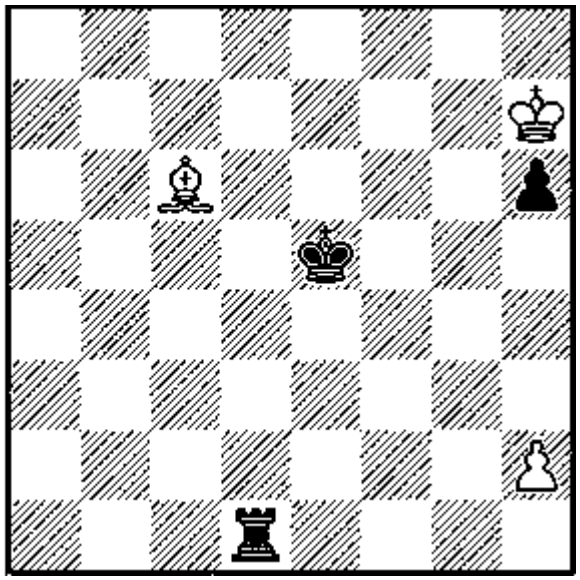
4 e5!!

The decisive argument in the fight for the turn to move in the main zugzwang position. 4 bc? Be5⊙–+ is bad.

4…B×e5 5 bc⊙ B×f6+ (5…Bh2 6 c5 Be5 7 cd) **6 gf⊙ Rh8 7 K×h8 Kd7** (the mined squares are g7 and e6) **8 Kg8! Ke6 9 Kg7**+–.

G. Kasparian, 1961

15-41



W?

1 Be8!

The h6-pawn cannot be captured now: 1 K×h6?? Rd6+. 1 Bf3? also loses: 1…Rd3! (rather than 1…Rd6? 2 h4! Kf4 3 Bh5 Kg3 4 Bg6= or 2…Kf5 3 Be2!=) 2 Bg4 (otherwise 2…Rh3) 2…Kf4.

1…Rd8

1…Rd6 2 Bg6 Kf6 3 K×h6 Rd4 4 Kh5= is not dangerous for White.

2 Bg6! Kf6 3 K×h6

In case of 3 h4?, Black wins by means of either 3…Rd4 4 h5 Kg5 or 4…Rh8+ 5 K×h8 K×g6 6 Kg8 h5.

3…Rh8+ 4 Bh7 Kf7 5 h3!

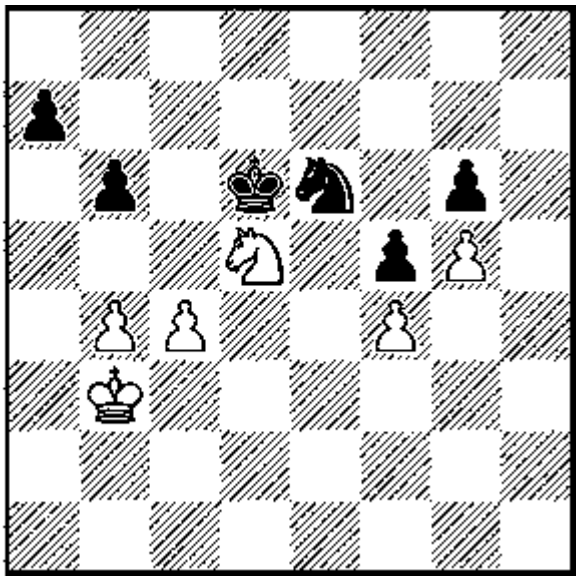
"The Steinitz rule" saves White: he can choose between a single or a double pawn move. After 5 h4? Kf6 6 h5 Kf7, he would have been in zugzwang, while now the fight ends in stalemate.

5…Kf6 6 h4 Kf7 7 h5⊙ Kf6 stalemate.

Tragicomedies

Petrosian – Schmid
Bamberg 1968

15-42

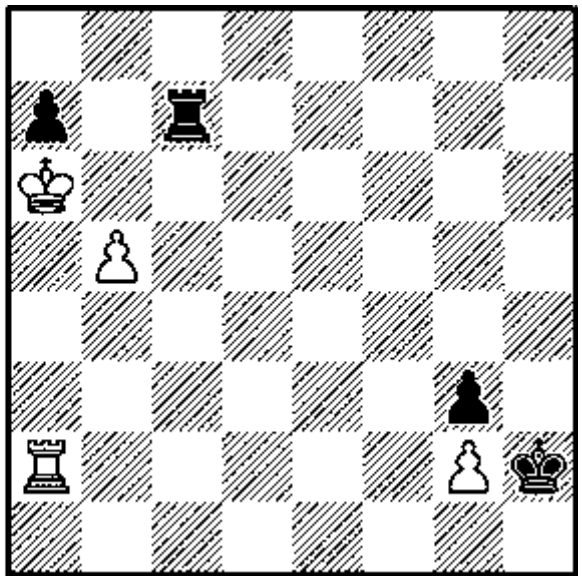


B?

Black could win easily by means of zugzwang: **1…b5! 2 Kc3** (2 Ne3 N×f4–+; 2 Nc3 Nd4+ 3 Ka3 bco) **2…bc 3 K×c4 a6!**. Instead of this, Schmid accepted the draw proposal of the world champion.

Zhuravlev – Vasiukov
USSR ch tt, Riga 1968

15-43



B?

1…Kg1?

Black could win by means of 1…Rf7! (zugzwang) 2 Ka5 (2 Rb2 Rf2 3 Rb1 Ra2+ 4 Kb7 K×g2–+) 2…Rf2 3 Ra4 K×g2 4 Ka6 Rf7–+.

2 Rb2?

White does not exploit his opponent's error. He had to leave the a-file with his king: 2 Ka5! Rf7 (2…Rc4 3 Ka6) 3 Kb4 with a draw, because now Rf2 can be always met with R×a7.

2…Rf7! 3 Rc2 Kh2 (3…Rf2? 4 Rc1+) **4 Ra2 Rf5!**

When the black rook is on f5 or f7, all White's moves can only worsen his position.

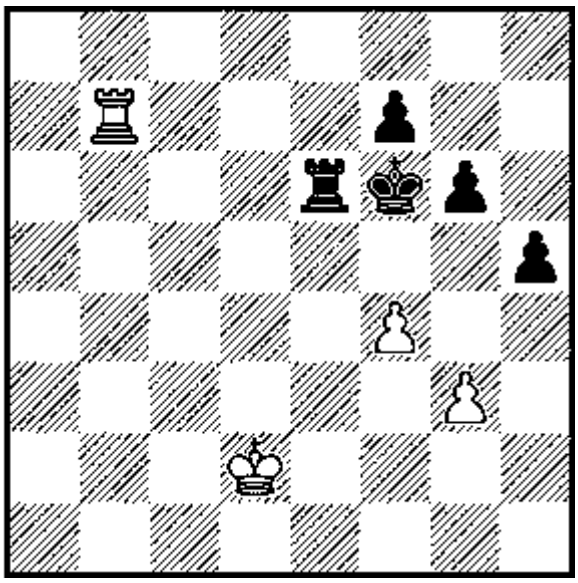
5 Ra5 K×g2 6 K×a7 Kh3!

White resigned in view of 7 Ka6 g2 8 Ra1 Rf1–+.

Šahovic – Liberzon

Lone Pine 1979

15-44



W?

White is in a very dangerous situation. His rook must stand on the seventh or fifth rank to prevent Black's …Kf5, and his king cannot go to d3 in view of Black's maneuver Re1-g1. Meanwhile Black plans …Re4 and …h5-h4.

The key to this position is reciprocal zugzwang that arises when the black rook stands on e4 and the white rook on a5. The reason can be seen from the following line: 1 Rb5! Re7 2 Rc5 (rather than 2 Ra5?) 2…Re4 3 Ra5! h4 4 Kd3! Rb4 5 Kc3! (5 gh? loses to 5…R×f4 6 h5 g5) 5…Rb1 6 gh Rf1 7 h5 R×f4 8 hg fg 9 Kd3 Rf5 10 Ra1 Re5 11 Rf1+ (or 11 Rg1) with a draw. If the black rook could occupy the a4-square, White could not have saved this ending.

The actual remainder of the game was:

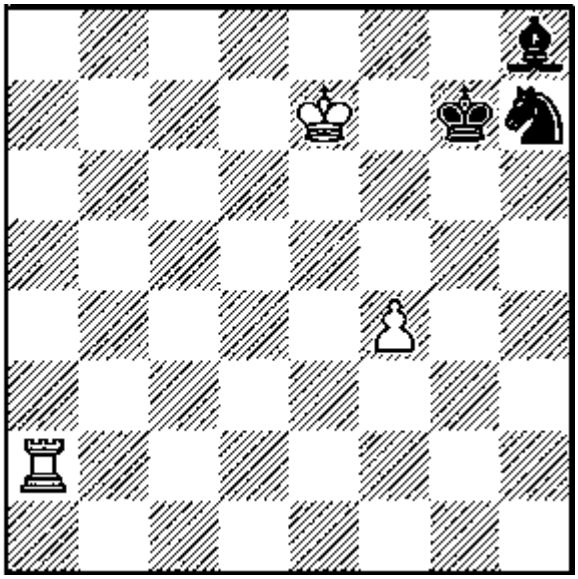
1 Ra7? Re4?

Neither opponent sees the correspondence between the a5- and e4-squares. After 1…Re7! 2 Ra5 Re4!, White is in zugzwang: 3 Rb5 h4 4 Kd3 Ra4 5 gh R×f4 6 h5 g5–+, or 3 Ra7 h4 4 Kd3 Rb4 5 Kc3 Rb1 6 gh Rf1 7 Ra4 Kf5–+.

2 Ra5= h4 3 Kd3 Rb4 4 gh?? (4 Kc3! Rb1 5 gh=) **4…R×f4–+ 5 h5 g5 6 Ra6+ Kg7 7 h6+ Kh7 8 Ke3 f6** White resigned.

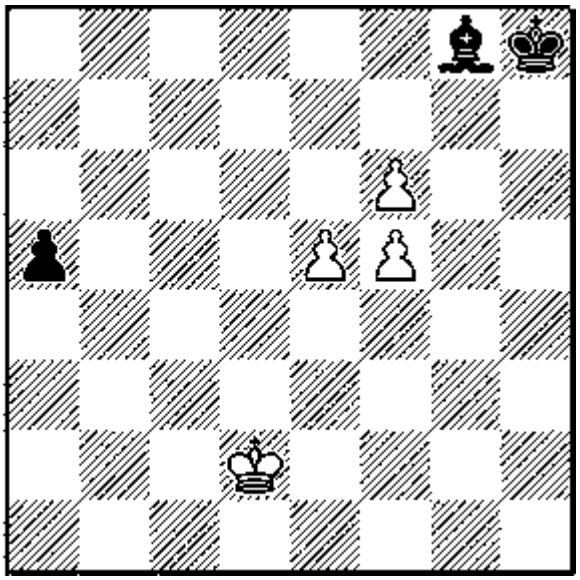
Exercises

15-45



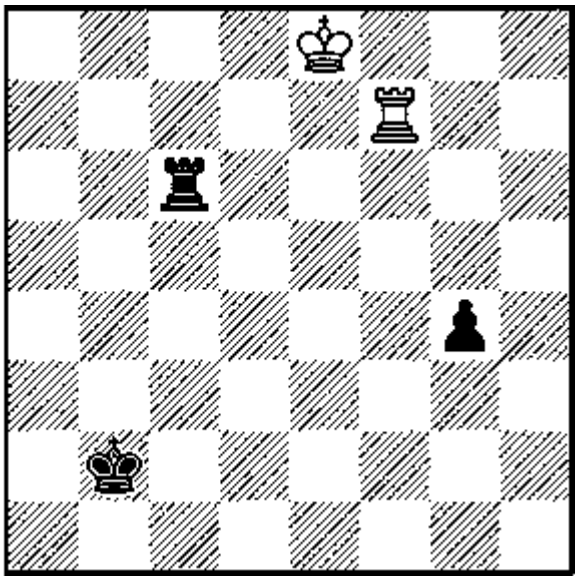
15/10
W?

15-46



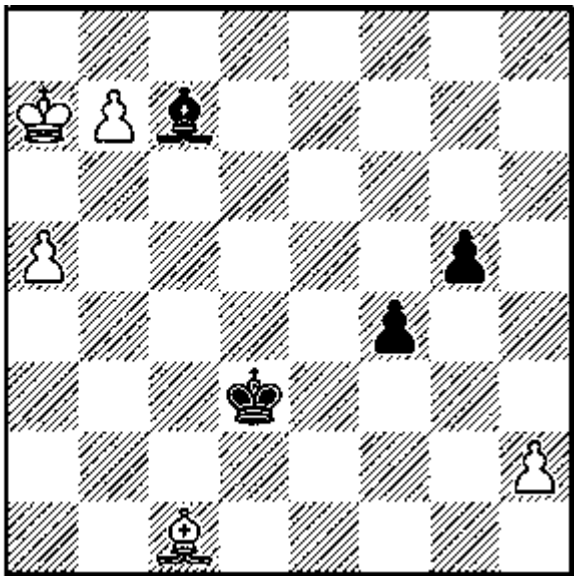
15/11
W?

15-47



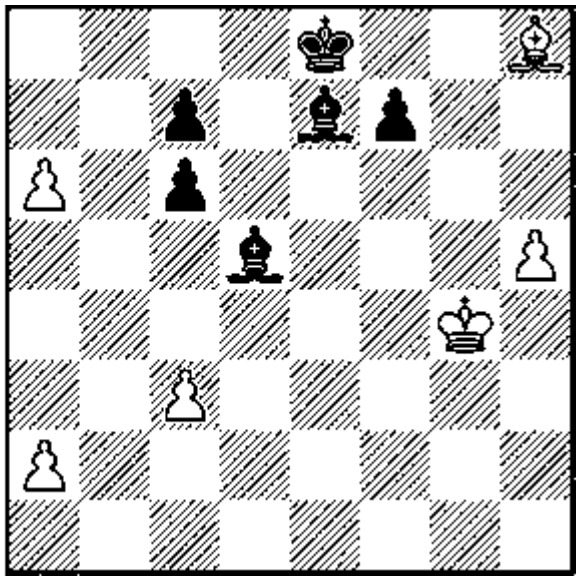
15/12
W?

15-48



15/13
W?/Play

15-49



15/14
W?/Play

Fortresses

We have discussed the construction of a fortress in several chapters (opposite-color bishops, a rook versus a minor piece, a queen versus a rook, a bishop versus pawns). These fortresses were mainly elementary and known to theory. Here we shall look at the problem more broadly. You will discover new types of fortresses, together with my own simple classification.

A Fortified Camp

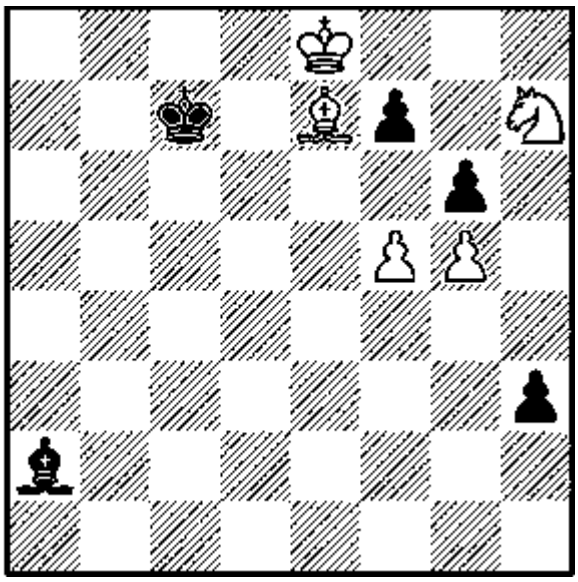
We define this as a situation in which a king, with or without the assistance of pieces or pawns, successfully defends a small territory (as a rule, in a corner) and cannot be ousted. Almost all the theoretical fortresses that are already known to you belong in this category.

I add only a single, more complicated example here.

F. Simkhovich, 1926

15-50

W?



The h3-pawn will inevitably be promoted. White's only chance for a successful defense consists in building a fortress: f5-f6 and Kf8-g7. But to build a reliable fortress he needs to place his bishop on h6. Otherwise Black brings his king to f5, takes the knight with his queen and captures the g5-pawn, winning. The question is whether White can perform this task in time.

The natural 1 f6? loses: 1…h2 2 Kf8 h1Q 3 Kg7 (3 Kg8 Kd7 4 Bf8 Qa8! △ …Ke6-f5–+) 3…Kc6 4 Nf8 Qh4 5 Nh7 Kd5 6 Ba3 Ke4 7 Bb4 Kf5 8 Bd2 Qf2 9 Bc1 Qe1 10 Ba3 Qh1, followed by 11…Q×h7+.

1 Bf6! Kd6 (1…h2? 2 Be5+) **2 Be7+ Kc6**

The king has been forced to occupy a square on the h1-a8 diagonal. This is precisely what White wanted. Simkhovich included the moves 2…Ke5 3 Bd8 Kd6 4 Be7+ and only now 4…Kc6. But after 2…Ke5?, White has a simpler draw: 3 fg fg 4 Kd7=.

3 f6! h2 4 Bf8! (rather than 4 Kf8? h1Q 5 Kg8 Qh2 6 Bf8 Qb8! 7 Kg7 Kd7 etc.) **4…h1Q 5 Bh6**=

The queen cannot deliver a check from a8, and the white king comes to g7 safely. White has successfully built an impregnable fortress.

A Pawn Barrier

Even a huge material advantage sometimes cannot be exploited when a pawn barrier lies across the chessboard. A king (or, as it may happen in exceptional cases, a king and other pieces) cannot overcome the barrier, and therefore there is no win.

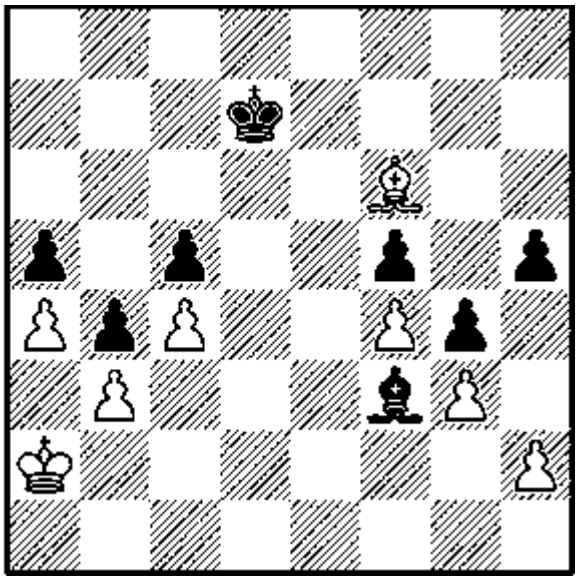
We saw this situation in the exercise 7/15 (in the chapter on bishop versus knight), in the annotation to 4 Kb3!. The alternative possibility led to the win of a piece and to … an obvious draw caused by erecting a pawn barrier that the king could not breach.

The following curious example is taken from a game between two leading chessplayers of their time.

Chigorin – Tarrasch

Vienna 1898

15-51

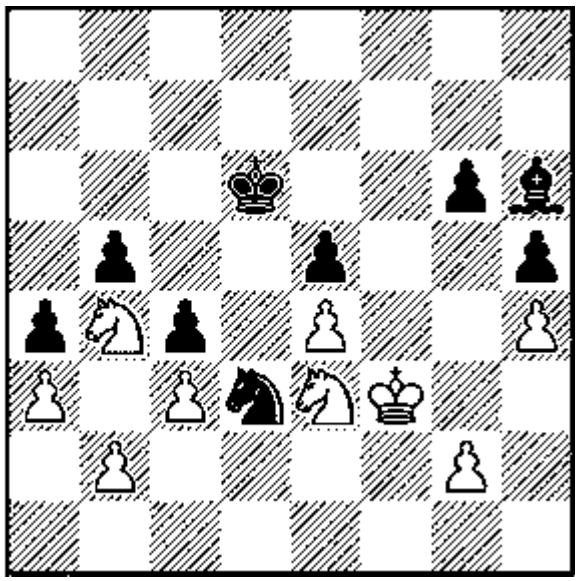


W

Chigorin offered a draw, and Tarrasch unexpectedly rejected this offer. Then Chigorin took his bishop away from the board and suggested his opponent to try to win with an extra piece. Tarrasch immediately accepted the draw proposal. Actually, his king cannot invade White's position, while his bishop alone cannot accomplish anything.

Keres – Portisch
Moscow 1967

15-52



W?

The b2-pawn is attacked. In case of an exchange on d3, the black king gets an open road into White's camp along the white squares: 1 N×d3? cd 2 g3 (2 Nd1 Bc1 △ …Kc5-c4-b3–+) 2…Kc5 3 Kf2 B×e3+ 4 K×e3 Kc4 5 Kd2 Kb3–+.

1 Nd1! Bc1 2 Ke2!

Obviously 2…B×b2? 3 N×b2 N×b2 4 Kd2= yields nothing, but why is Black not able to take the pawn with his knight? This was Keres' idea.

2…N×b2? 3 N×b2 B×b2 4 Kd2 B×a3 5 Kc2.

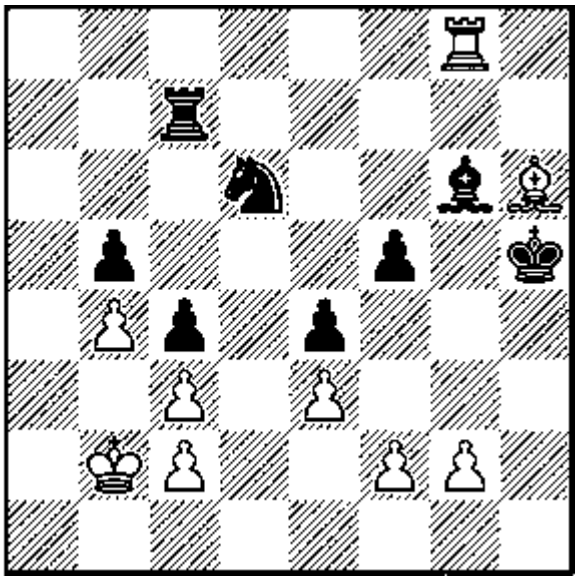
How does one exploit two extra pawns? Black's bishop is locked, White intends to move his king from c2 to b1 and back. If 5…g5, then 6 g3!. If Black brings his king to c5 or a5, White gives a knight check from a6 (resp. c6) and plays back to b4. Finally, if Black exchanges his bishop for the knight, his king will be unable to cross the barrier, so both passed pawns at a4 and c4 will be useless.

Portisch recognized this clever trap and chose **2…Nc5! 3 Kf3 g5!**; this allowed him to subsequently exploit his positional advantage.

L. Pachman, 1953

15-53

W



1 Bf4 Rc8! 2 g4+! fg 3 B×d6!!

In case of 3 R×g6? K×g6 4 B×d6 g3!, Black wins by invading with his king along the white squares. However, 3 R×c8!? N×c8 4 Bg3= is an alternative solution that the author has not observed. Black may win the c3-pawn with his knight, but then Kd2 and c2-c3 follows, and no further progress can be achieved. The two black pieces, the king and bishop, cannot breach the pawn barrier.

With the rook, it is precisely the same.

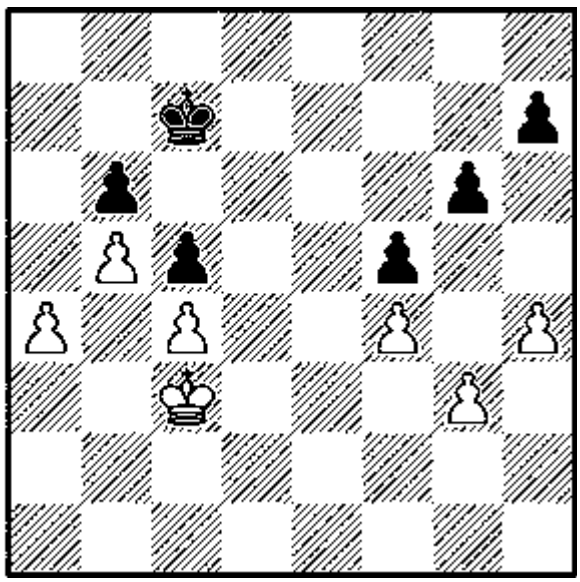
3…R×g8 4 Bg3!=.

Tragicomedies

Kengis – Yuneev
USSR 1989

15-54

B?



Black had to complete the building of his barrier with 1…h5!=. However, Yuneev thought that this could be postponed.

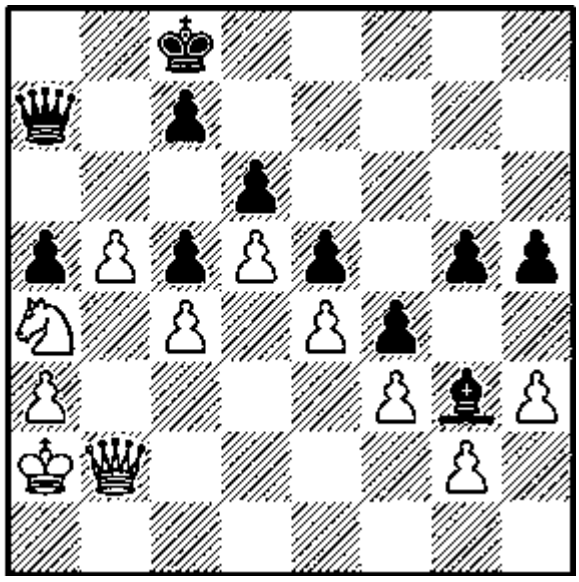
1…Kb7?? 2 h5! gh 3 Kd3 h4

Black obviously counted only on 4 gh? h5=.

4 Ke3! hg 5 Kf3 Black resigned.

A. Petrosian – Hazai
Schilde jr 1970

15-55



B

Black is strategically lost. He tries his last chance, and the trap suddenly succeeds.

1…Qb6!? 2 N×b6+??

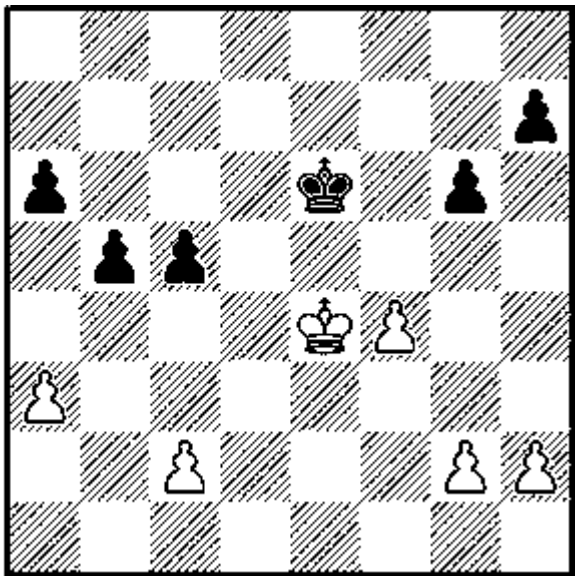
Unjustified greed. After 2 Qd2! followed by, say, Kb3, Nb2, Ka4, Nd3-c1-b3, White could have won the a5-pawn and won the game.

2…cb (△ 3…h4=) **3 h4 gh 4 Qd2 h3! 5 gh h4**

Draw. Neither the king nor queen can overcome the barrier.

So. Polgar – Smyslov
London 1996

15-56



B?

White's king is more active but still White stands worse. After …a6-a5-a4, her king will be forced out of the center in view of Black's threat to create a passed pawn.

1…a5?

A technical error – 1…h5! would have been much stronger. By this temporary prevention of g2-g4 (the move White should play in all cases), Black could have gained the decisive tempo: 2 g3 (2 h3 h4–+) 2…a5 3 h3 a4 △ 4…b4–+.

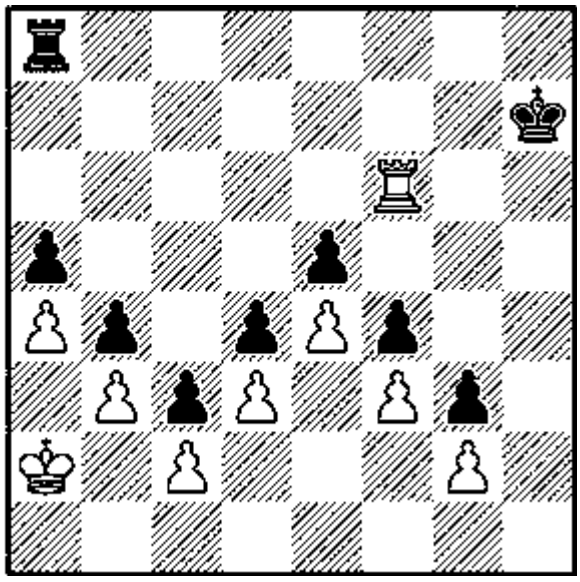
2 g4! a4 (2…b4 3 a4! c4 4 Kd4 c3 5 Kc4 Kd6 6 Kd4=) **3 Kd3 b4** (3…Kd5 4 c3 or 4 c4+ bc+ 5 Kc3) **4 ab??**

An error in return. After 4 c4!! b3 (4…bc 5 K×c3=) 5 Kc3 h5 6 h3, Polgar could have achieved a draw because the black king could not invade White's position.

4…a3 5 Kc3 cb+ 6 Kb3 Kd5 White resigned.

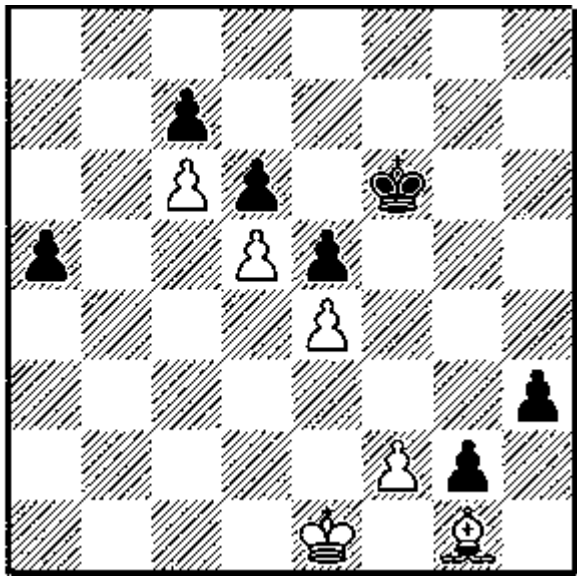
Exercises

15-57



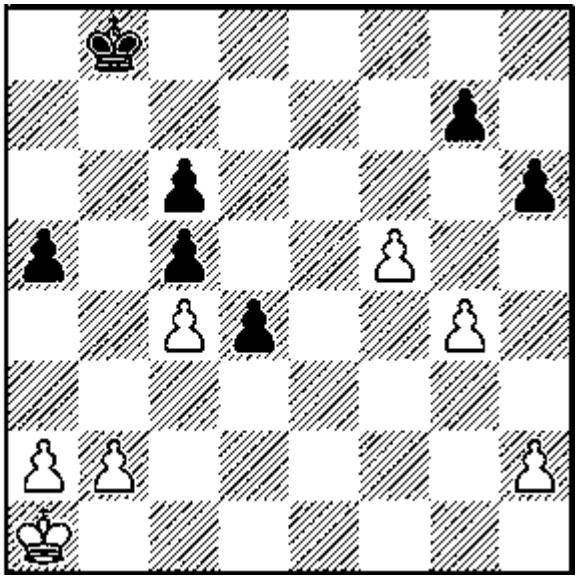
15/15
W?

15-58



15/16
W?

15-59



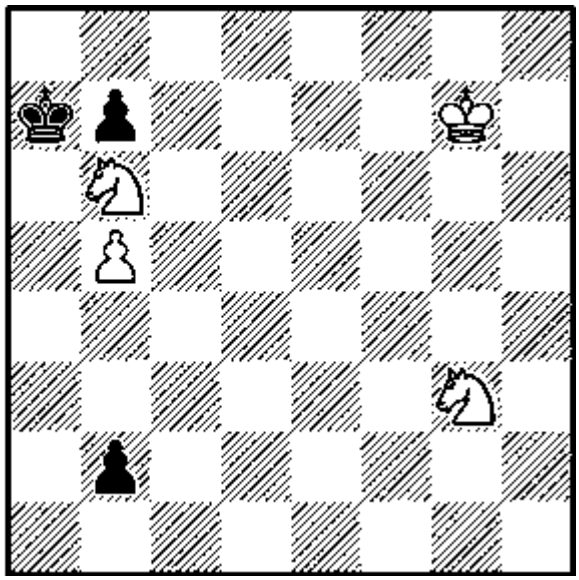
15/17
W?

An Imprisoned King

Sometimes the hostile king can be “caged” on an edge of the board. Without its participation, the remaining pieces may be unable to achieve any success.

V. Smyslov, 1998

15-60



W?

1 Nd5! b1Q 2 b6+ Kb8

If 2…Ka6, then 3 Ne2! and 4 Nec3=. The black king is locked on a6 and a5, while the queen cannot mate alone. Black could have won if he had managed to put White in zugzwang by stalemating his king. For example, 3…Qf1 4 Nec3 Qf5 5 Kh6?? Qg4 6 Kh7 Qg5 7 Kh8 Qg6–+, but after 5 Kg8!, he cannot manage this. The queen is denied the important f6-square, or after 5…Qd7 6 Kf8 (6 Kh8?? Qf7–+) 6…Ka5 7 Kg8, the e7-square. 5…Qg6+ also gives nothing: 6 Kf8! Qh7 7 Ke8 Qg7 8 Kd8 Qf7 9 Kc8=.

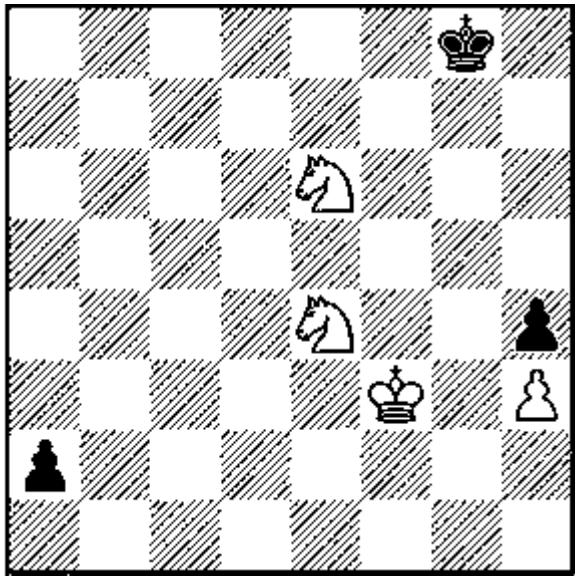
3 Nh5! Qg1+ 4 Kf7! Kc8 5 Nhf6 Kd8 6 Ke6!=

Here again the draw is obvious because the black king cannot leave the edge. After 6 Kf8? Qg6! ⊙, however, White should have released the king. Zugzwang is the main danger in that and all similar situations, but it can usually be avoided in practice.

Even a knight alone can arrest a king. If Black played his king to a8 on move 2 while the white knight was on d7 and his king on an adjacent square, the second knight would not have been needed.

P. Pechenkin, 1953*

15-61



B

After 1…a1Q 2 N4g5, the black king would have been caged as in the previous example.

1…Kf7!? 2 N6g5+ Kg6

The king is free, but White manages to save himself by creating a fortified camp around his own king.

5 Kg2! a1Q 6 Nf3 Kf5 7 Nfd2=

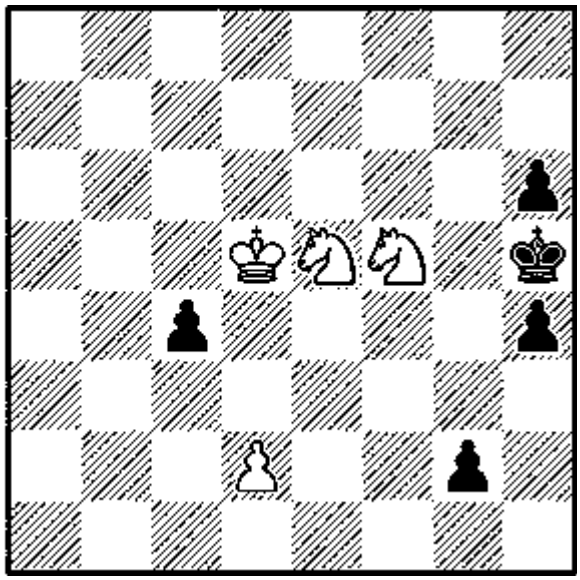
The black king cannot go farther than f4 and e2, while the queen cannot come close enough to

the white king to deny it the free squares in the corner; therefore the draw is inevitable.

Here is another example of this theme, a much more difficult and impressive one.

K. Behting, 1906

15-62



W

White cannot stop the pawns:
(a) 1 Nf3? h3 2 Ne3 h2–+;
(b) 1 N×h4? K×h4! 2 Nf3+ Kg3 3 Ng1 h5–+;
(c) 1 Ng7+? Kg5 2 Ne6+ Kf6 3 Nf3 h3–+.

Hence his only hope is to create a fortress. The process of building it starts with an apparently senseless king move.

1 Kc6!! g1Q

If 1…h3 (1…Kg5? 2 Nf3+), then 2 Ng3+ Kh4 3 Ne2 h2 4 Nf3+ Kh3 5 N×h2 K×h2 6 Kc5 g1Q+ 7 N×g1 K×g1 8 K×c4=.

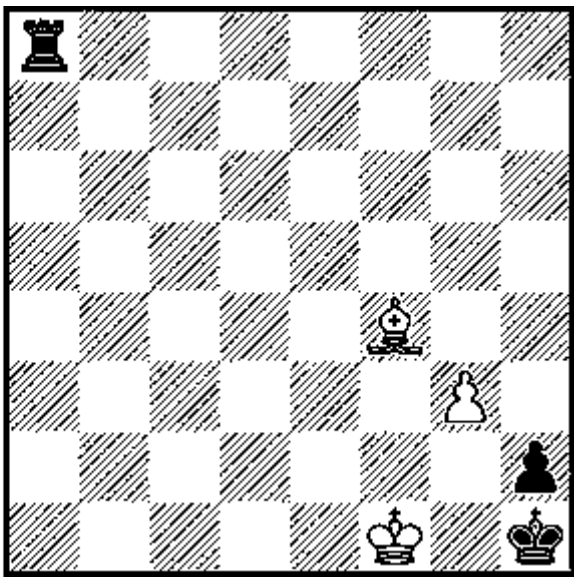
2 N×h4! Qh1+ (2…K×h4 3 Nf3+) **3 Nhf3**=, and the black king is locked on the edge of the board.

Both 1 K×c4? and 1 Kd6? would have made this plan impossible because Black could give a zwischenschach on move 2, so that his queen was brought away from any knight fork.

Locking in with knights is just one of several methods of immobilizing the hostile king.

Reshevsky – Fischer
Los Angeles m (11) 1961*

15-63



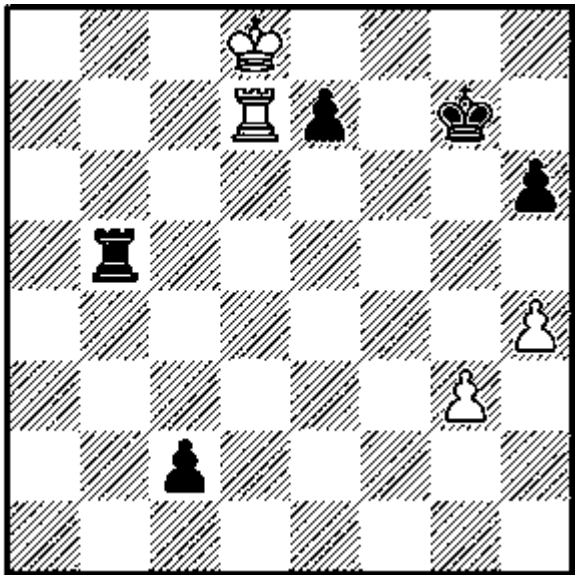
W?

Fischer, in his annotations to the game, wrote that White loses in view of 1 Kf2 Ra2+ 2 Kf1 Ra3! 3 Kf2 Rf3+! 4 K×f3 Kg1 5 Be3+ Kf1–+. However Murey demonstrated a rather simple way to a draw, based on locking in the king.

1 Be3!! Ra1+ 2 Kf2 Ra2+ 3 Kf1! (3 Kf3?? Ra3–+) **3…Ra3 4 Bb6 Rf3+** (4…R×g3 5 Kf2) **5 Bf2! Rf7 6 g4 Rg7 7 Bb6 R×g4 8 Kf2! Rg6 9 Ba7 Rf6+ 10 Kg3**=, and the king cannot get away from the corner. Kling and Horwitz found the final position as long ago as the middle of the 19th century.

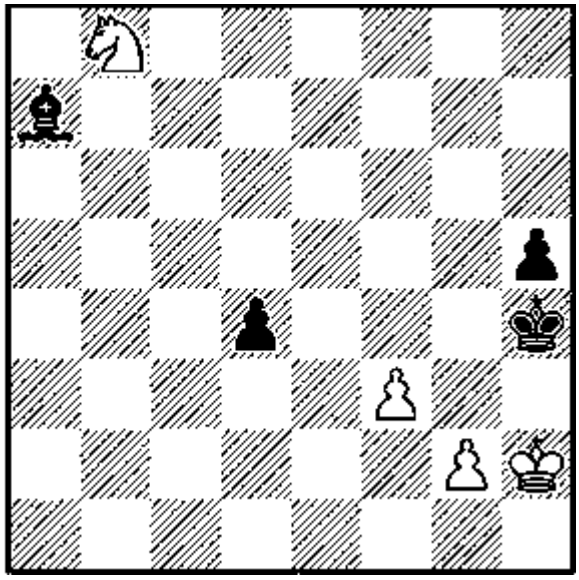
Exercises

15-64



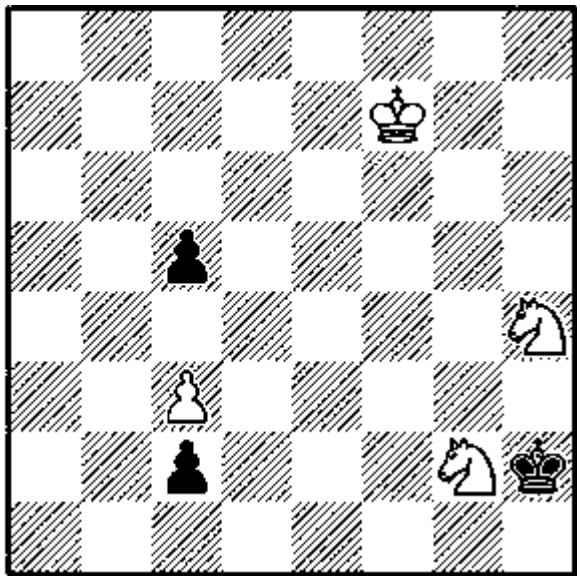
15/18
W?

15-65



15/19
W?

15-66



15/20
W?

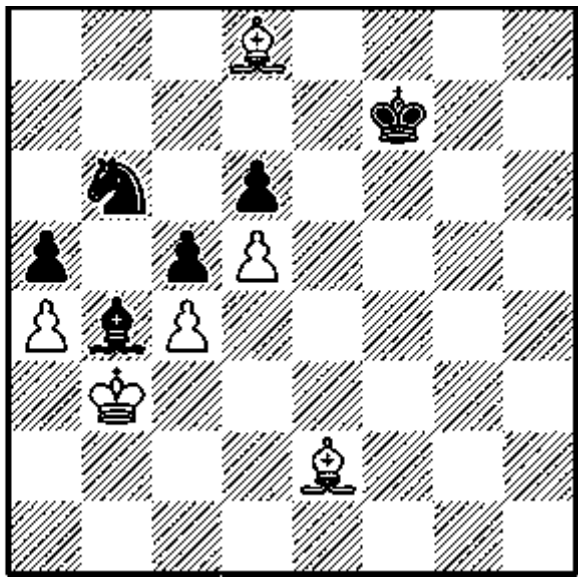
An Imprisoned Piece

Any piece, not just a king, can be “imprisoned.”

Chess composers, by the way, use the word “blockade” for such cases. I prefer to avoid it because this word has a different sense when referring to practical chess.

Kobaidze – Tsereteli
USSR 1970

15-67



B

1…Ke8! 2 B×b6 Ke7 Draw.

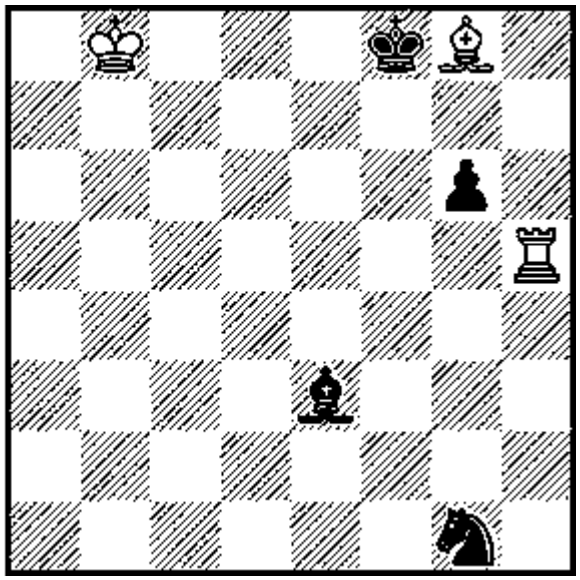
The white bishop is locked in forever; it can only be given away for a pawn. Without its support, White’s king and light-square bishop are unable to do anything.

In case of 1…Na8 2 Bh5+ Kf8 3 Kc2, Black would have played …Nb6! sooner or later anyway in order to parry the threat of White’s king coming to e6.

A. Gurvich, 1952

15-68

W?



1 Rh4?! K×g8 2 Rg4 Kg7 (2…g5? 3 Kb7 △ 4 Rg3=) 3 Kb7! is seemingly strong. If 3…Kf6?, White holds by means of permanently pursuing the bishop: 4 Rg3 Bc5 (4…Bf2 5 Rg2, 4…Bd4 5 Rg4 Nf3 6 Rf4+) 5 Kc6 Ba7 6 Kb7=. But 3…Kh6!! is much stronger: 4 Rg3 Bc5! 5 Kc6 Bd4! 6 Rg4 (6 Kd5 Ba7–+) 6…Nf3! 7 Rf4 (without a check!) 7…Ne5+ 8 Kd5 Bg1!, and Black manages to move the pieces away from attacks: 9 K×e5 Bh2–+ or 9 Rf1 Bh2 10 Rh1 Ng4–+.

The correct method is to keep the bishop rather than the rook, in order to use it for locking in the black knight on g1.

1 Rh8! Kg7 2 Bh7! g5 3 Bf5!! K×h8 4 Bg4 Kg7 5 Kc7 Kf6 6 Kd6 Bc1 7 Kd5 Ba3 8 Ke4(d4) Ke7 9 Kd5! Kd8 10 Kc6! Bb4 11 Kb7! Ke7 12 Kc6 Kf6 13 Kd5=

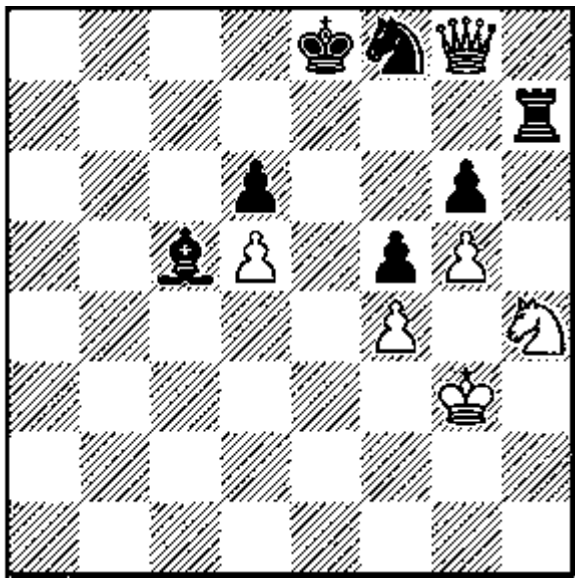
Unfortunately for Black his king is also locked in addition to the knight.

Even as strong a piece as a queen can sometimes be immobilized.

Ree – Hort

15-69

B?



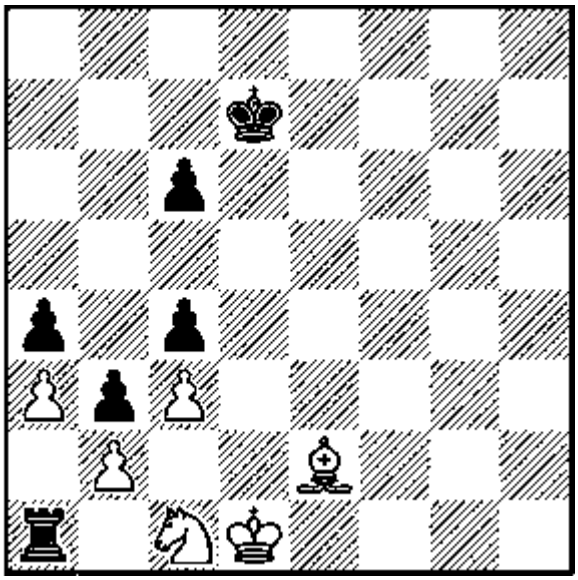
After 1…Bf2+? 2 K×f2 R×h4, Black is most probably lost: 3 Kg3 Rh7 4 Kf3, followed by the king's march to c6.

1…R×h4!! 2 K×h4 Bd4! 3 Kg3 Ke7 4 Kf3 Ba1

Draw. The queen has no square to go to.

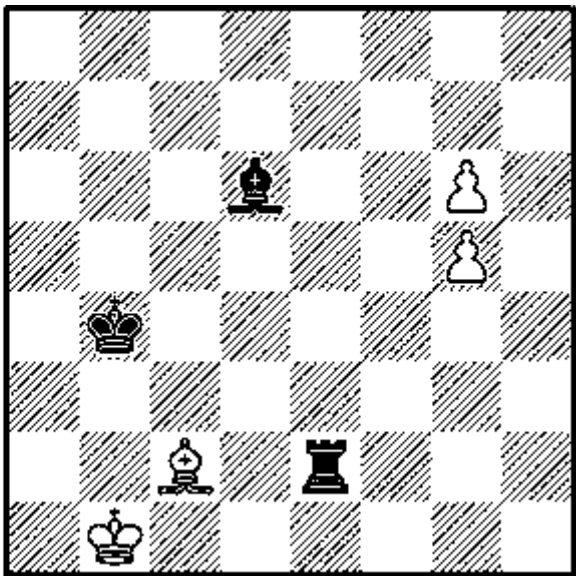
Exercises

15-70



15/21
W?

15-71



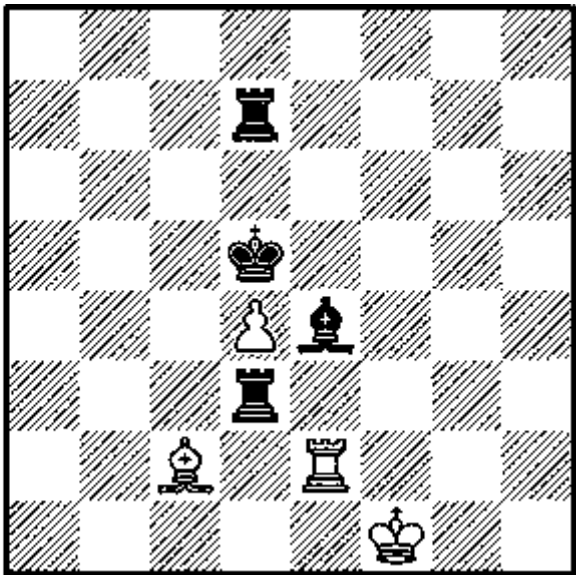
15/22
W?

Binding

Utilization of a material advantage can sometimes be impossible because one piece of the stronger side is pinned or must protect an important square (another piece, or pawn).

***Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1889**

15-72



W

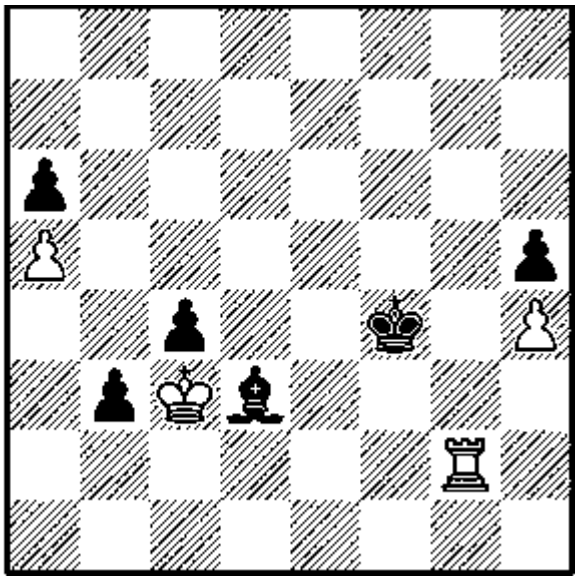
1 R×e4! K×e4 2 Ke2 R7xd4 3 Bb1=

One of Black's rooks is pinned; another rook together with the king must protect it. Therefore

Black has no win in spite of his huge material advantage.

Vaganian – Georgadze
Erevan zt 1982

15-73



B?

It is not easy for Black to find an acceptable move. Both 1…Kf3? 2 Rg5 and 1…Bc2? 2 Rg5 Bd1 3 Rg6 lose a pawn. 1…Ke4? is not much better in view of 2 Rg5 Be2 3 Rg6 (with the threat 4 R×a6 b2 5 Rb6+–) 3…Bd3 4 Rh6+–.

Georgadze finds the only good possibility: he drives his king forward to help his passed pawns.

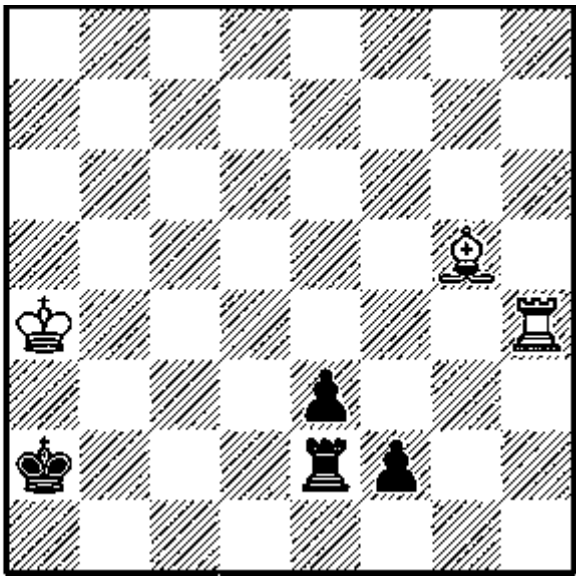
1…Ke3! 2 Rg5 b2! 3 K×b2 Kd2 4 Rc5 (4 Rg2+ Be2) Draw.

After 4…Be2, White cannot make progress because his rook must watch the passed c-pawn.

In case of 2 Rg3+ (instead of 2 Rg5), the simplest reply is 2…Kf4! 3 Rg5 Be2 4 Rg6 Bd3=, and White can play neither 5 R×a6? b2 nor 5 Rh6? Kg4. However, 2…Ke2 does not lose either: 3 Rg5 Kd1! (3…b2? 4 Rg2+) 4 R×h5 Kc1 5 Rg5 Be2 6 Rg1+ Bd1 7 Rg2 Bf3! (the squares h5 and h2 are mined: 7…Bh5? 8 Rh2⊙+–) 8 Rh2 Bh5⊙=.

Exercises

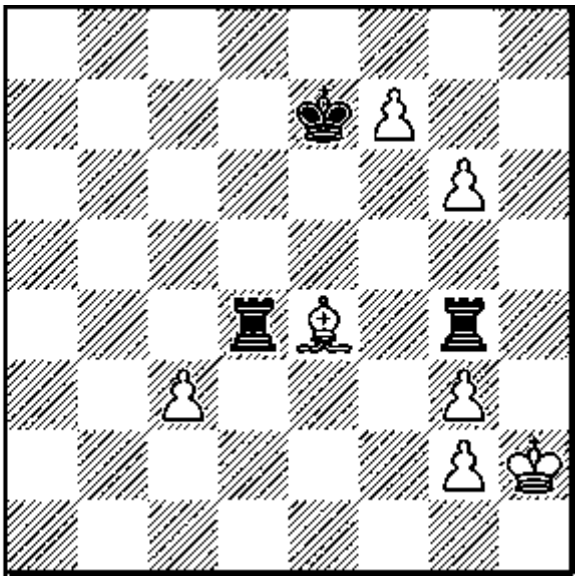
15-74



15/23
W?

15-75

15/24
W?



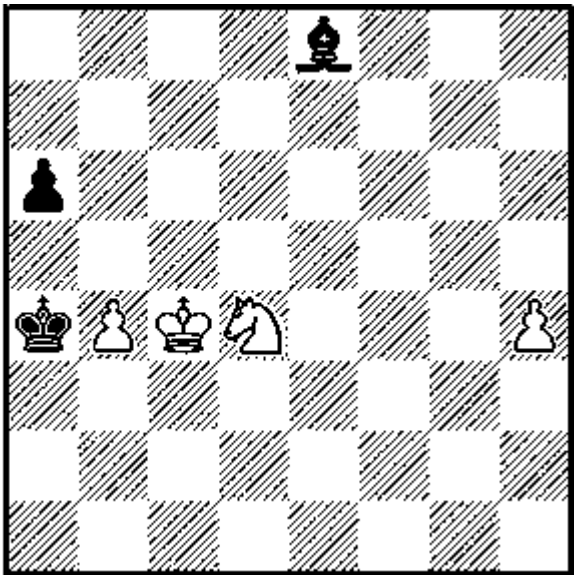
Stalemate

Another important defensive resource, besides building a fortress, is stalemate. It should be taken into account without regard to material balance, as stalemate situations can arise quite suddenly.

Polovodin – S. Ivanov
Leningrad ch 1984

15-76

B?



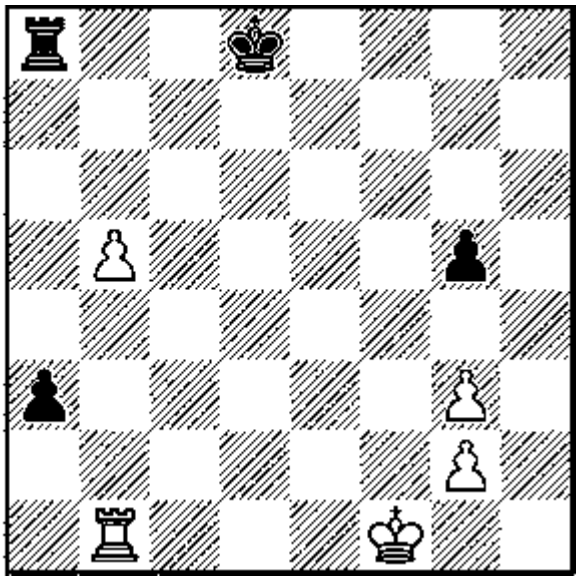
1…a5!!=

Black would have been quite helpless without this resource, for example 1…Bh5? 2 Kc5 Bg4 3 Nc6 Be2 4 Na5 Bh5 5 Nc4 Kb3 6 Nb6 △ Nd5-f6(f4). Now, however, 2 b5 B×b5+! 3 N×b5 leads to a stalemate and 2 ba K×a5 – to a drawn endgame.

V. Smyslov, 2000

15-77

W?



1 Ke2 looks quite natural, but after 1…Kc7 2 Kd3 Kb6 3 Kc4 (3 Ke4 Ra5–+) 3…a2! 4 Ra1 g4 White is lost (5 Kb3 K×b5 6 R×a2 R×a2 7 K×a2 Kc4–+).

Playing for a stalemate is his salvation.

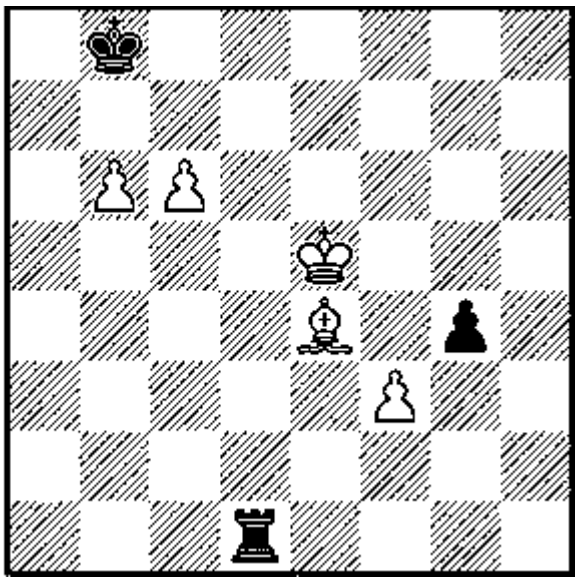
1 b6! (the threat 2 b7 forces Black to push his pawn to a2) **1…a2 2 Ra1 Kc8 3 g4! Kb7 4 g3 K×b6 5 Kg2 Kb5 6 Kh3 Kb4 7 R×a2!**=.

Goldstein – Shakhnovich

Moscow 1946

15-78

B?



1…gf!

1…g3? is wrong: 2 c7+ Kc8 3 Bf5+ Rd7 4 Bh3 g2 5 B×g2+–.

2 B×f3

If 2 c7+ Kc8 3 B×f3 (3 Bf5+ Rd7=), then 3…Rc1 4 Kd6 Rc6+!.

2…Rd7!!

Only this fine move holds the game. At first I thought that 2…Rc1 3 Kd6 Kc8! was also sufficient for a draw. For example, 4 Bd5 (4 c7 Rc6+!) 4…Rc2 5 Be6+ Kb8 6 Kd7 (6 c7+ Kb7 7 c8Q+ R×c8 8 B×c8+ K×b6) 6…Rd2+ 7 Ke7 Rc2 8 Kd6 Rc1 9 Bd5 Kc8!, or 4 Be2 Kb8! 5 Kd7 (5 Ba6 Rd1+) 5…Rc2! (5…Rc3? 6 Ba6) 6 Bd3 Rc1!. Reciprocal zugzwang: Black loses if it is his turn to play, but now White is on move.

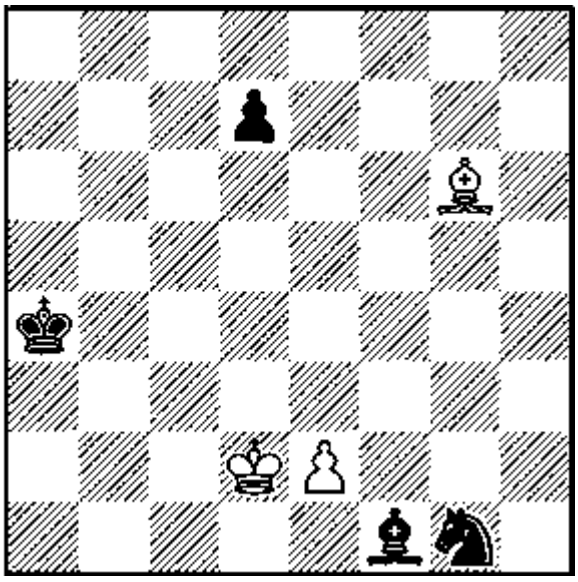
However, grandmaster Karsten Müller found the following winning way for White: 4 Bg4+ Kb8 5 Kd7 Rc3(c2) 6 Bf5 Rc4 (Black must beware of 7 Be4; in case of 6…Rc1 7 Bd3, we have the reciprocal zugzwang position from above, but with Black to play) 7 Be6 Rc5 8 Bb3⊙, and wherever the rook goes along the c-file, 9 Bd5 will be decisive.

3 Ke6 Rb7!! Draw.

G. Kasparian, 1963

15-79

W?



White's attempts to win a piece back fail: 1 Ke1? B×e2 2 Kf2 Nh3+ 3 K×e2 Nf4+ or 2 Bc2+ Kb4 3 Kf2 Nf3! 4 K×e2 Nd4+. Therefore he chooses another plan: attacking the d-pawn.

1 Ke3! B×e2 (1…Bh3? 2 Kf2=; 1…Bg2? 2 Bc2+ and 3 Kf2=; 1…Nh3? 2 Be8=) **2 Bf5! d6**

Both 2…Bb5 3 Kf2 Ne2 4 B×d7 and 2…d5 3 Be6 Bc4 4 Kf2 Ne2 5 B×d5 lead to an immediate draw.

3 Kd4! (4 Kd5 is threatened) **3…Bf3 4 Be4 Ne2+**

White's threats are parried (5 Kd5? Nc3+), but an unexpected stalemate in the center of the board saves him now:

5 Kc4!! B×e4 stalemate.

Or 5…Bh5 6 Bc6(c2)+ and 7 Kd5=.

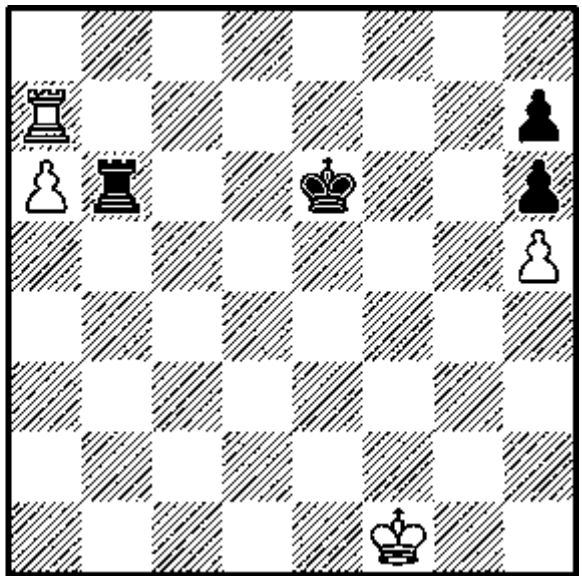
A situation can arise when the defender has only one mobile piece, and if it can be sacrificed, a stalemate occurs. Even though the opponent rejects the Greek gift, "***the desperado***" continually offers itself for capture.

To escape from the pursuit of a "desperado queen" is almost impossible. With a rook in the "desperado" role, everything depends on the specific circumstances.

A. Frolovsky, 1989

15-80

W?/Play



1 Ra8!

1 R×h7? Kf5 2 a7 Ra6 leads to a draw. It seems now that Black may well resign in view of the threat 2 a7.

1…Rb1+ 2 Kg2!!

This move can be played only if White has discovered Black's stalemate idea and evaluated it well enough. The apparently natural 2 Ke2? misses a win because of 2…Ra1 3 a7 Kf6!! 4 Rf8+ Kg7 5 a8Q Re1+! (a desperado rook) 6 Kf2 (6 Kd2 Rd1+) 6…Rf1+ 7 Kg2 Rf2+! (7…R×f8!? is also good enough for a draw) 8 Kg3 Rf3+ 9 Kg4 Rf4+.

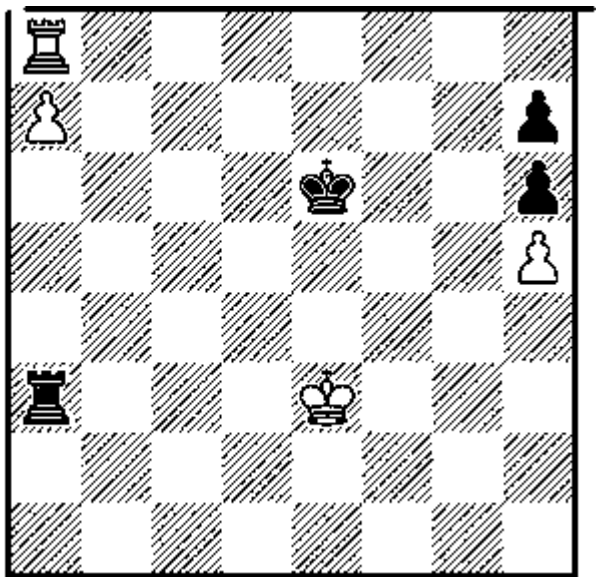
2…Ra1 3 a7 Ra2+

After 3…Kf6 4 Rf8+ Kg7 5 a8Q, the desperado rook is curbed immediately: 5…Rg1+ 6 Kh2!, and there are no checks anymore because the queen keeps the squares g2 and h1 under control.

4 Kg3! Ra3+ 5 Kf4 Ra4+ 6 Ke3 Ra3+ (6…Kf6 7 Rf8+ Kg7 8 a8Q Ra3+ 9 Kf4!+–)

15-81

W?



7 Kd4!

The final subtlety. 7 Kd2? is inaccurate: after 7…Kf6! 8 Rf8+ Kg7 9 a8Q Rd3+!, the white king cannot escape.

7…Kf6 (7…Ra4+ 8 Kc5 Kf6 9 Kb6 Rb4+ 10 Ka5) **8 Rf8+ Kg7 9 a8Q**+–

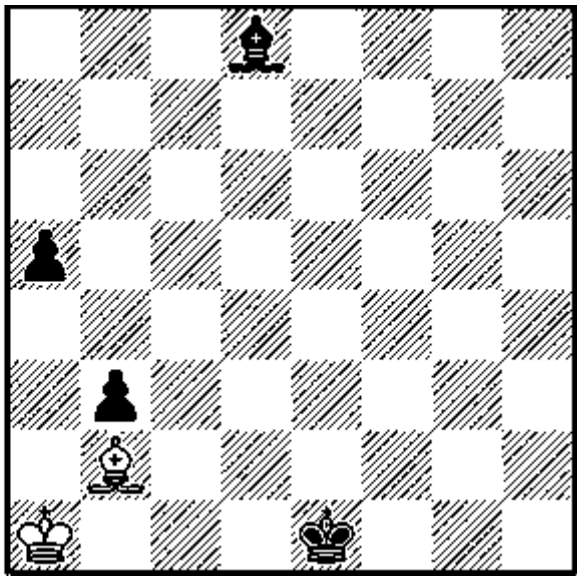
The checks will rapidly run out 9…Rd3+ 10 Ke5 Re3+ 11 Kf4.

In practice, the rook is the most frequent kind of desperado, but other pieces can also play the role.

H. Weenink, 1918

15-82

W?



1 Bc3+ Kd1 (1…Ke2? 2 B×a5=) **2 Kb1!** 2 B×a5? fails to 2…Kc2–+, while after 2 Kb2? Black

wins by means of 2…a4 3 Ka3 Kc2.

2…a4 3 Bf6! Bc7 4 Be5! Bb6 5 Bd4! Ba5! 6 Bc3! a3!

The only possible attempt to avoid a stalemate or a permanent pursuit.

7 B×a5 a2+ 8 Ka1!

8 Kb2? loses to 8…a1Q+! 9 K×a1 Kc2 10 Bc3 K×c3.

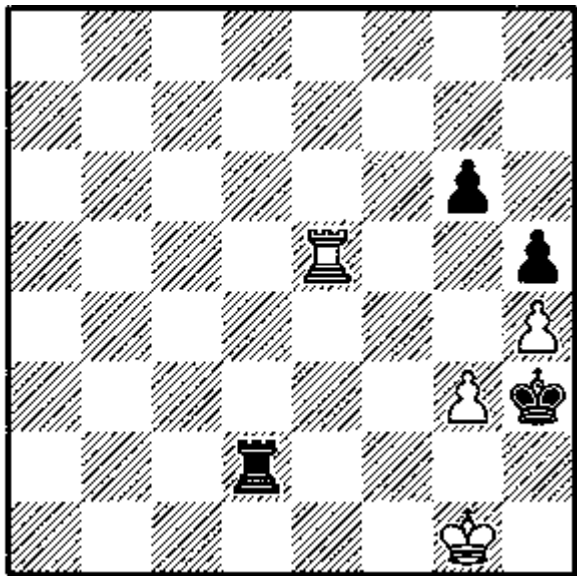
8…Kc2 9 Bc3! K×c3 stalemate.

Tragicomedies

Trabattoni – Barlov
La Valetta 1979

15-83

W?



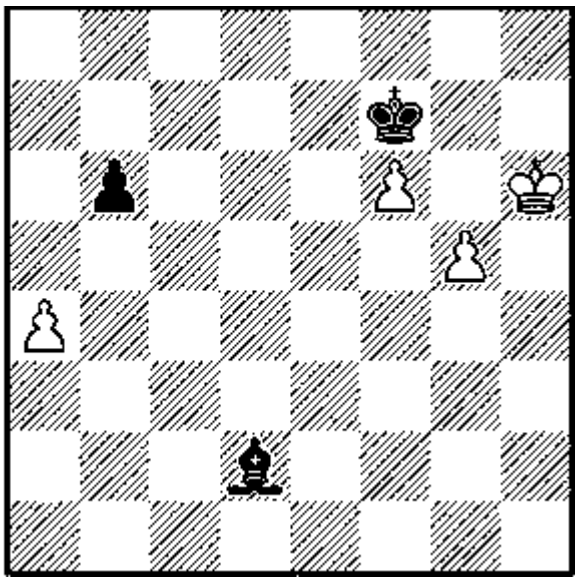
A simple stalemate combination could have led to a draw: 1 Re6! Rg2+ 2 Kh1 R×g3 3 R×g6!. White played **1 Rg5?** with the same idea, but after **1…Rg2+ 2 Kh1 Rf2! 3 Kg1 Rf6!**, instead of the desired stalemate, a reciprocal zugzwang arose.

4 Ra5 Rf3 5 g4 Rg3+ 6 Kh1 K×g4 7 Ra4+ Kh3 White resigned.

Zapata – Vaganian
Thessaloniki ol 1984

15-84

B?



1…Bc3?

As Vaganian demonstrated, the waiting move 1…Bc1! wins for Black. The main line is then 2 Kh5 Bb2 3 Kg4 (3 Kh6 B×f6–+) 3…Kg6 4 Kf4 Bc1+ 5 Ke5 B×g5 6 Kd6 Bd2! 7 Ke7 (7 Kc6 Ba5) 7…Bb4+ 8 Ke6 Bc3 9 f7 Bb4!–+ (rather than 9…Kg7? 10 Ke7 Bb4+ 11 Ke8⊙ Bc5 12 Kd7 K×f7

13 Kc6=).

Another winning continuation is 1…Be3 2 Kh5 Bc1 (in case of 2…Bd4? 3 Kg4 Kg6 4 Kf4, Black's bishop is placed too close to the white king) 3 Kh6 Bd2! (the bishop will occupy the optimal b4-square because of this triangular maneuver) 4 Kh5 Bc3 5 Kg4 Kg6 6 Kf4 Bb4!? (after 6…Bd2+ 7 Ke5 B×g5 we transpose to the Vaganian line) 7 Ke5 (7 Kg4 Bd2⊙) 7…K×g5 8 f7 Kg6 9 Ke6 Kg7 10 Kd7 K×f7 11 Kc6 Ba5–+ (Inarkiev).

2 a5??

White misses the saving resource: 2 g6+! K×f6 3 a5! ba 4 g7 Kf7 5 Kh7 B×g7=. Zapata has hit on the stalemate idea but the transposition of moves is fatal for him.

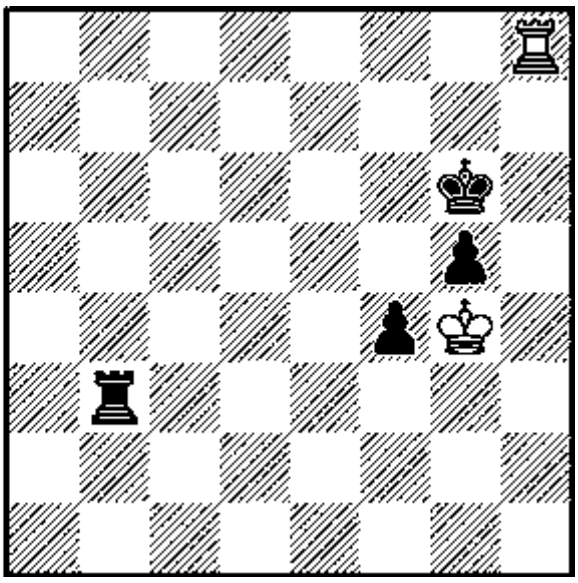
2…ba 3 g6+ Kg8! White resigned.

Another tragicomical incident happened in the same Greek town four years later.

Hickl – Solomon
Thessaloniki ol 1988

15-85

W?



1 Rg8+ Kf6 2 Rf8+??

2 Rg6+! led to a stalemate; the spectators saw this possibility, but the players overlooked it.

The game was adjourned here. An elementary win was possible after 2…Ke7 or 2…Kg7, but Black decided to repeat moves to be "on the safe side" and sealed **2…Kg6??**.

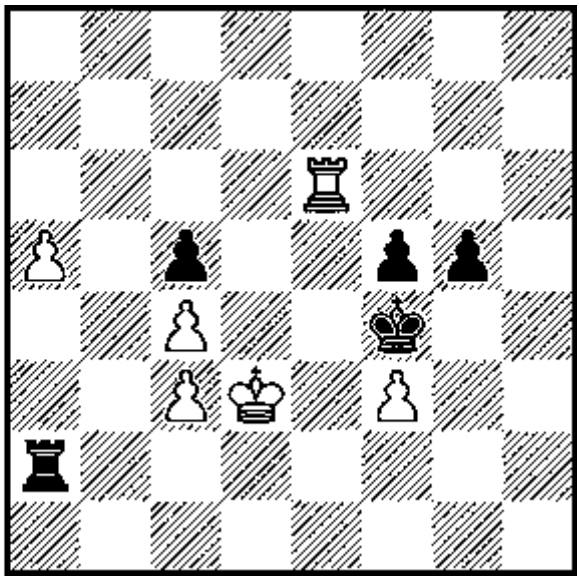
The captain of the Australian team ordered his player Solomon, to look satisfied, to go back to the hotel immediately, and to stay silent. Hickl did not suspect that his opponent could have sealed such a move and did not want to return for a hopeless resumption, so he resigned the next morning at breakfast.

Many cases of miraculous salvation through stalemate can be mentioned. I want to add just one more.

Jansa – Rublevsky
Ostrava 1992

15-86

W?

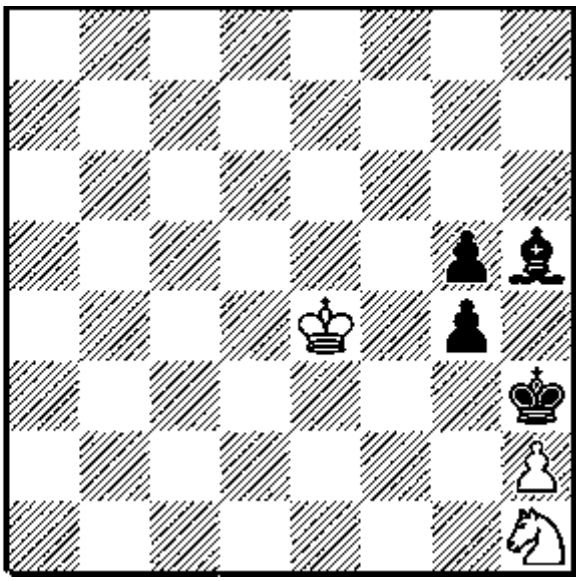


1 a6 K×f3 is completely hopeless; Jansa finds the best practical chance.
1 Re2! R×a5? 2 Ra2! R×a2 Draw.
1…Ra4!? 2 Rg2 (2 Rf2 Kg3) 2…Ra1!⊙ was winning.

Exercises

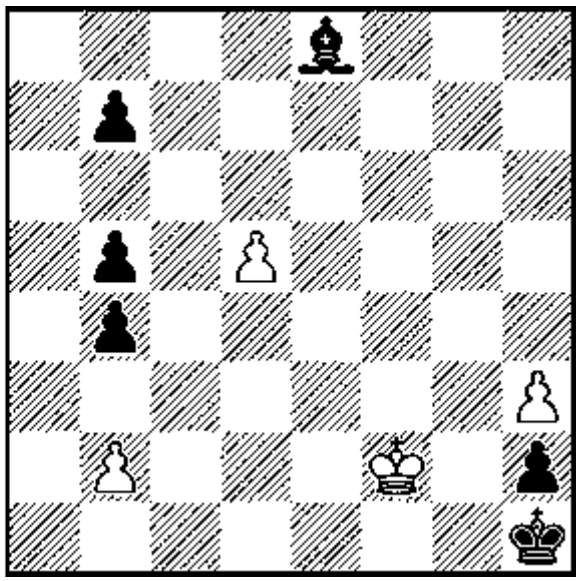
15-87

15/25
W?

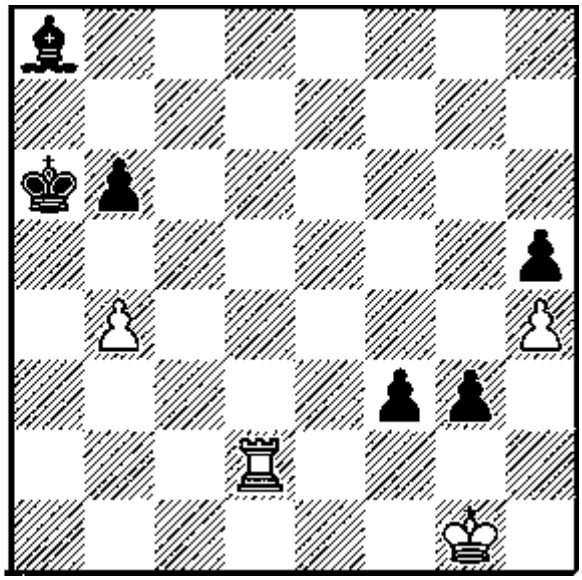


15-88

15/26
W?

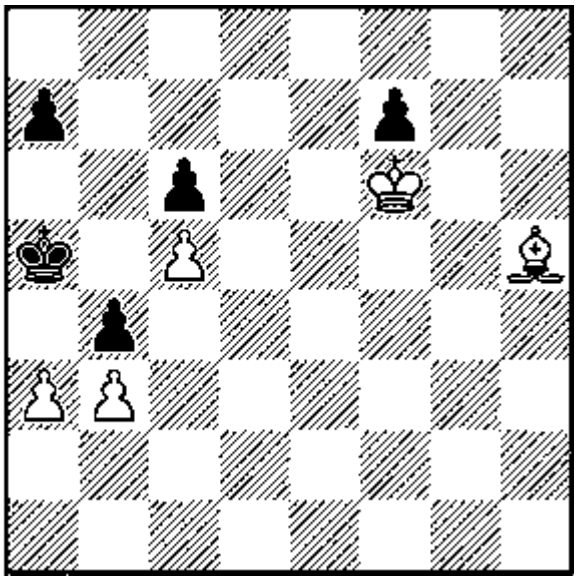


15-89



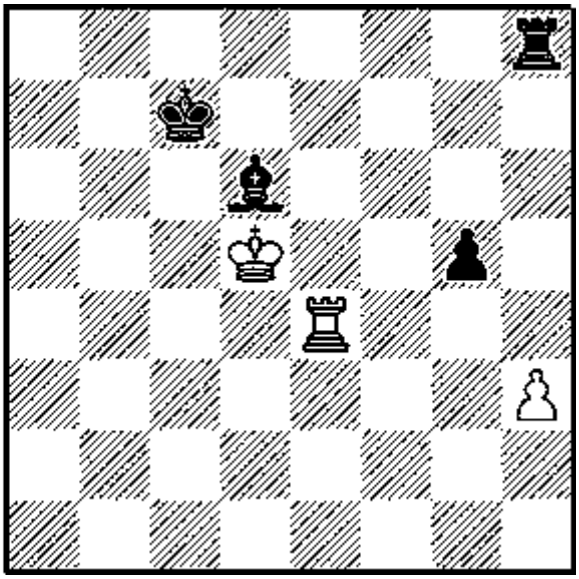
15/27
W?

15-90



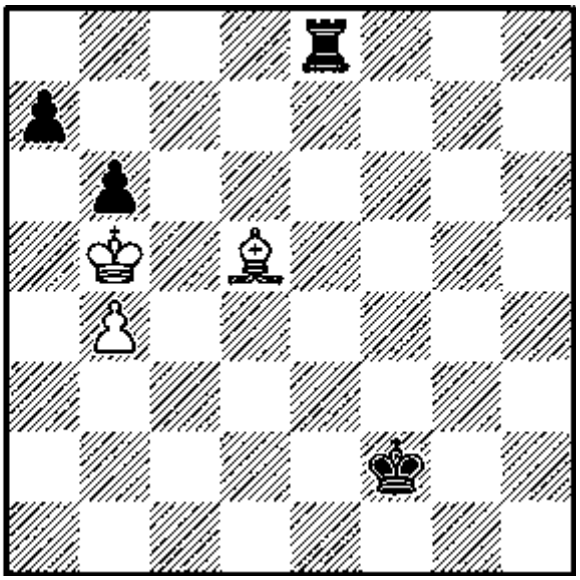
15/28
W?

15-91



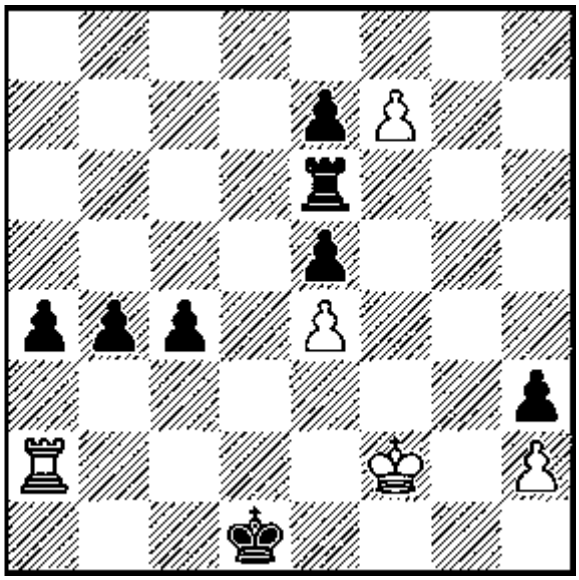
15/29
W?

15-92



15/30
W?

15-93



15/31
W?/Play

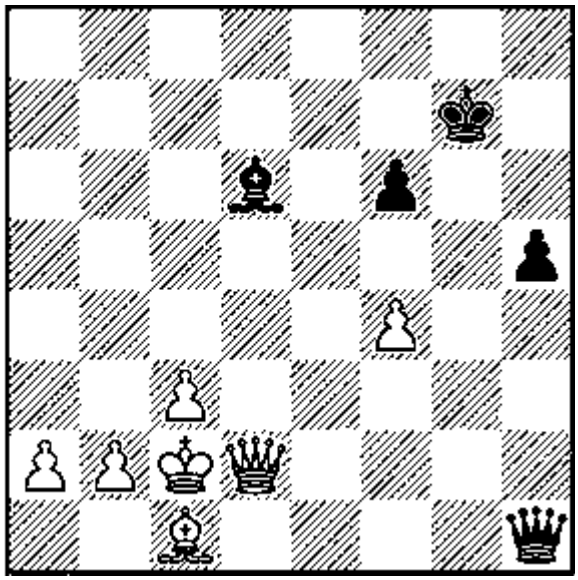
Checkmate

The aim of chess is checkmate. But a mating net can hardly be made when only a few pieces remain on the board. First one should obtain a considerable advantage by means of a pawn promotion. Therefore, as has been mentioned already, creation and advance of passed pawns is the main theme of endgames.

However king attacks are possible in endgames, too. They happen relatively seldom but are almost always sudden, because our thoughts are occupied with other topics and mate threats can be easily overlooked.

Simagin – Bronstein
Moscow ch 1947

15-94

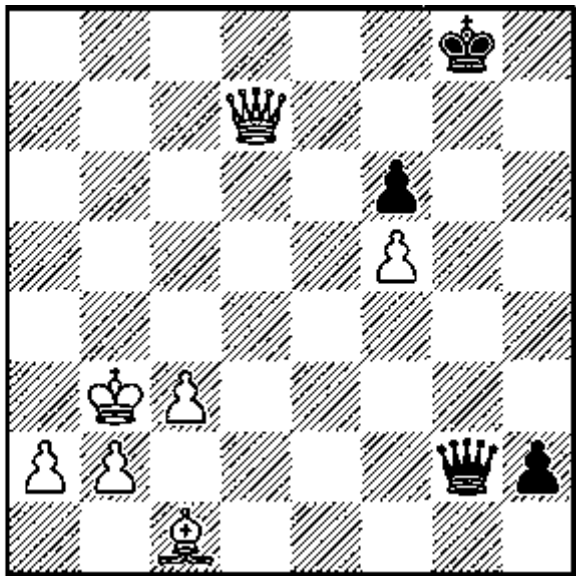


B

1…Qe4+ 2 Qd3 Qg2+ would have led to an easy draw. However, Bronstein decided to force a draw by means of a bishop sacrifice in order to rapidly advance his passed pawn.

1…h4? 2 Q×d6 Qg2+ 3 Kb3 h3 4 Qd7+! Kg8 (4…Kg6 5 f5+ Kh5 6 Bf4+–) **5 f5 h2**

15-95



W?

It might well seem that White can only give perpetual check. These illusions were dispelled by the following pretty stroke.

6 Bg5!! h1Q

If 6…fg, then 7 f6 with an inevitable mate; after 6…Q×g5 7 Qc8+ Kg7 8 Qc7+ the h-pawn is lost.

7 Qe8+ Kg7 8 Qg6+ Kf8 9 Q×f6+ Kg8 10 Qd8+ Kg7 11 Qe7+

Another way to a mate was 11 Bf6+ Kf7 12 Qe7+ Kg8 13 Qe8+ Kh7 14 Qh8#.

11…Kg8 12 Qe8+

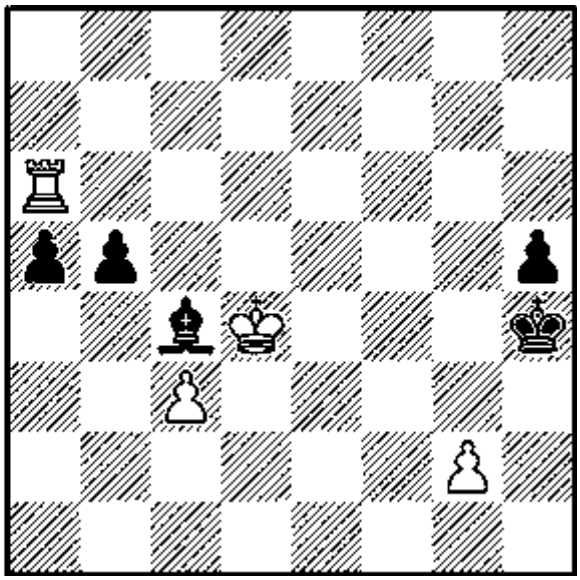
Black resigned on account of 12…Kh7 13 Qg6+ Kh8 14 Bf6# or 12…Kg7 13 f6+ Kh7 14 Qf7+ Kh8 15 Qg7#.

The queen is a powerful piece, so it is no wonder that its presence on the board is often dangerous for the hostile king. But a mating net can also sometimes be achieved with more modest forces.

Moldoyarov – Samochanov

cr 1974

15-96



W?

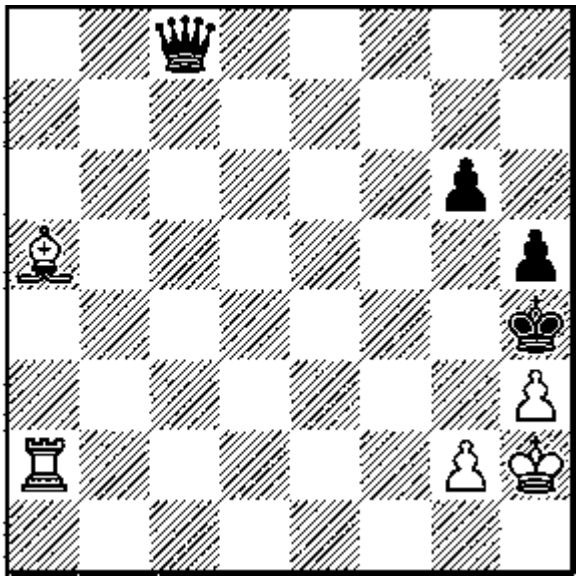
1 Rg6!

White plays for mate. 1 R×a5? Kg3 leads to a draw.

1…a4 2 Ke3 a3 3 Kf4 a2 4 Rg3! Be6 5 Rh3+! B×h3 6 g3#.

S. Kaminer, 1925

15-97



W?

Unlike the previous examples, here one feels that the black king is in danger. Paradoxically, White must immediately give up his strongest fighting unit to successfully conduct the attack.

1 Rc2!! Q×c2

Black must accept the sacrifice. If 1…Qb8+, then 2 Bc7 Qf8 3 Rc5! Q×c5 4 Bd8+ and 5 g3#. 1…Qf8 2 Rc4+ Kg5 3 Bd2+ Kf6 4 Rf4+ is also bad. Other queen retreats are met with 2 Rc5, cutting off the king's escape.

2 Bd8+ g5 3 Ba5!

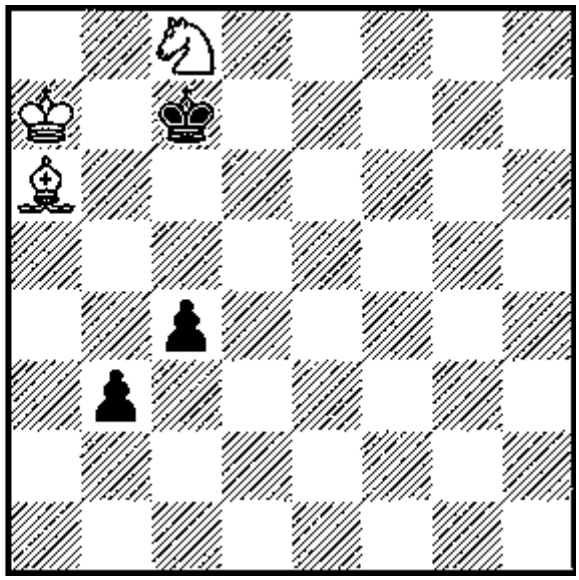
An amazing position: a bishop proves stronger than a queen. 4 Be1+ is threatened. Black will be mated immediately after 3…g4 4 Bd8# or 3…Qd1 4 g3#, while after 3…Qf2 4 Bc7, he is in zugzwang.

3…Qe2 4 Bc7! (△ Bg3#) **4…Qf2 5 Bd6!**⊙ (rather than 5 Be5? g4) **5…Qf4+ 6 g3+! Q×g3+ 7 B×g3#**.

L. Kubbel, 1940

15-98

W?



Does this position belong here? Is there any semblance of mating ideas, or is the only question whether White can safely block the black pawns? Let's see:

1 Nb6 b2 2 Nd5+ Kd6 3 Nc3 Kc5 4 Nb1! Kb4 (if 4…Kd4, then 5 Bc8! c3 6 Bf5+– – a barrier) **5 Kb6 c3**

Both 5…Kb3 6 Bc8 Kc2 7 Bf5+ and 6…c3 7 Kb5 are no better.

6 Bd3 Kb3 7 Kb5 c2 8 Bc4#

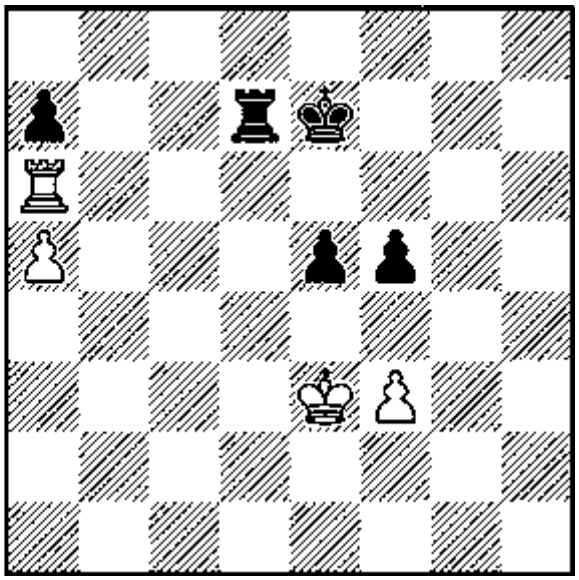
It is mate after all!

Tragicomedies

Pilskalniece – Berzinš
Riga 1962

15-99

B



The position is drawish; the extra pawn has no effect because of the activity of White's rook.

1…f4+!? 2 Ke4??

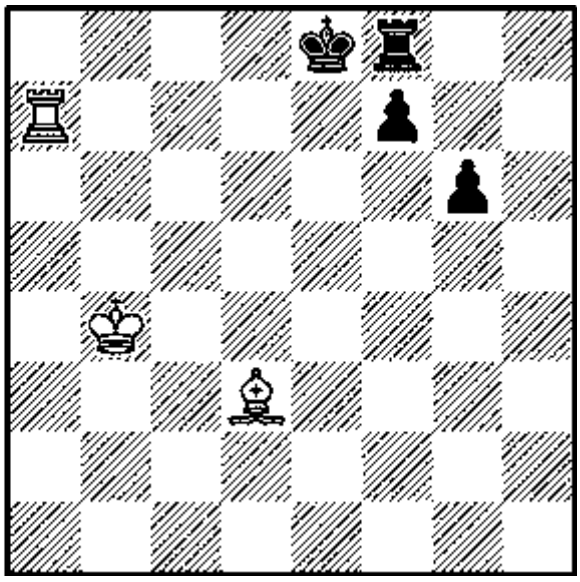
Black's rather primitive trap is successful. White could have held the balance after 2 Ke2!.

2…Rd6!

White resigned. After 3 R×a7+ Ke6 the mate 4…Rd4# can be postponed only by means of a rook sacrifice. The pawn endgame is hopeless: 3 R×d6 K×d6 4 a6 Ke6 5 Kd3 Kd5⊙ 6 Kc3 (6 Ke2 Kc4) 6…e4.

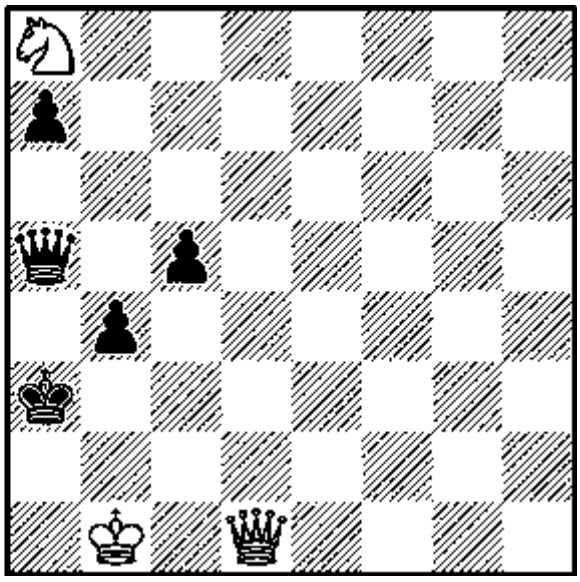
Exercises

15-100



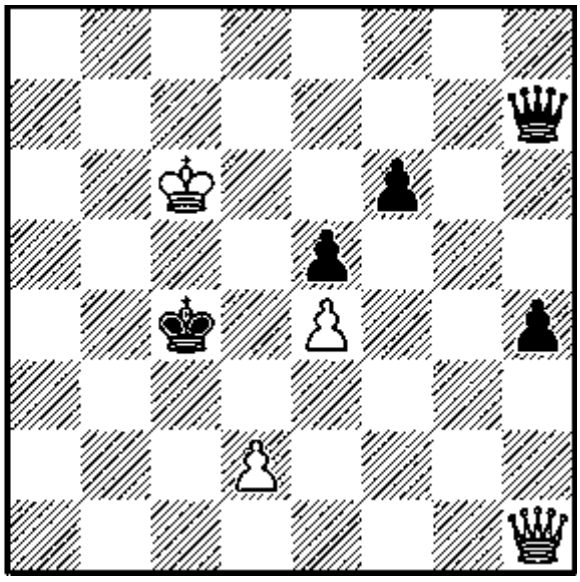
15/32
W?

15-101



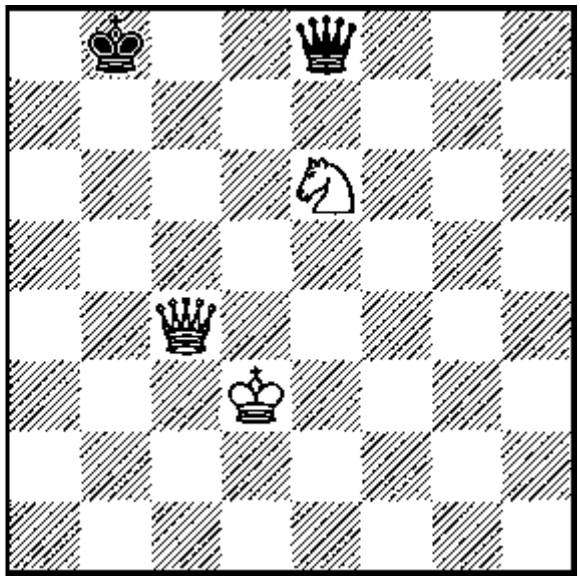
15/33
W?

15-102



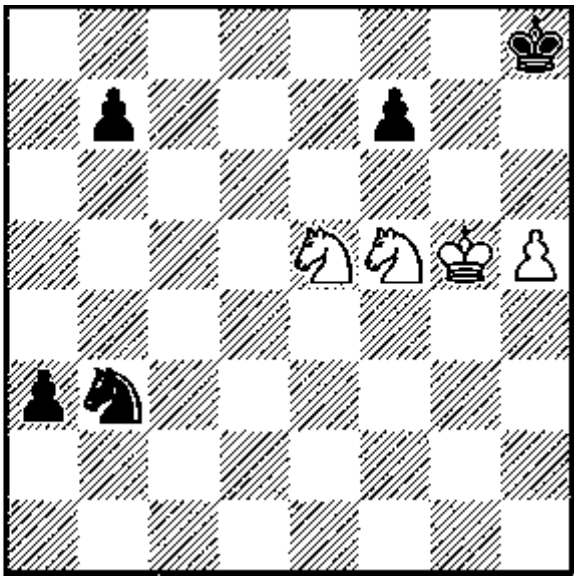
15/34
W?

15-103



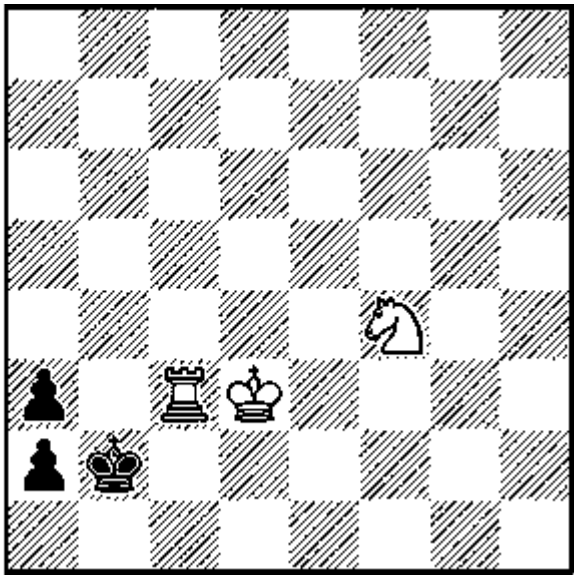
15/35
W?

15-104



15/36
W?

15-105



15/37
W?/Play

Domination

We use the word “domination” to name the technique that involves trapping an enemy piece by taking control of all of its flight squares. This method is not only applicable in endgames. Botvinnik was of the opinion that clever play for domination, in all stages of the game, is a characteristic feature of the chess style of the 12th World Champion Anatoly Karpov.

Domination can be implemented in many ways. One can catch and eliminate an enemy piece or simply deprive it of all moves. Sometimes one can just make important squares inaccessible to

certain pieces in order to prevent their interference in the main events on the board.

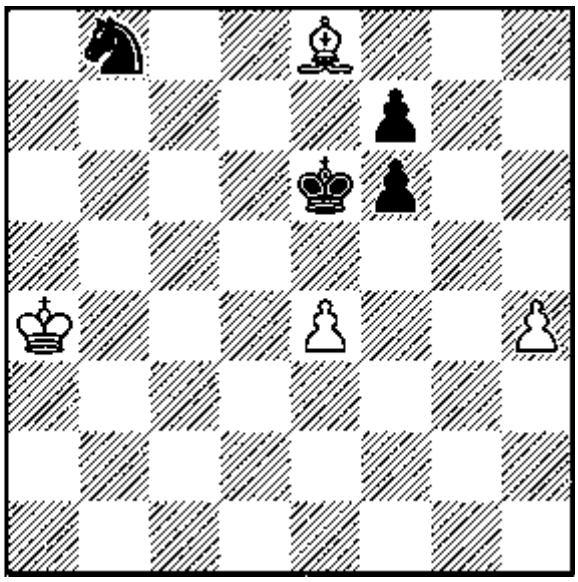
Please visualize some endgames with an extra exchange: catching a lonely knight when it is separated from its king, or a win with a rook versus a bishop when a king is in a dangerous corner, or the Elkies position (diagram 11-24).

Perhaps a knight is caught the most often because it is the least mobile piece.

Al. Kuznetsov, 1955

15-106

W?



1 h5 f5 2 h6 Kf6 3 ef Na6 4 Kb5!

To prevent liberation of the knight, White must sacrifice his bishop.

4…Nc7+ 5 Kc5!

After 5 Kc6? N×e8 (reciprocal zugzwang) 6 Kd7, Black holds: 6…K×f5! 7 h7 Nf6+. White must lose a tempo in order to get the same position with Black to move.

5…N×e8

5…Na6+ 6 Kc4 Nc7 7 Bc6 Na6 8 Kb5 Nc7+ 9 Kb6 Ne6 10 fe fe 11 Be8! e5 12 Kc5+–.

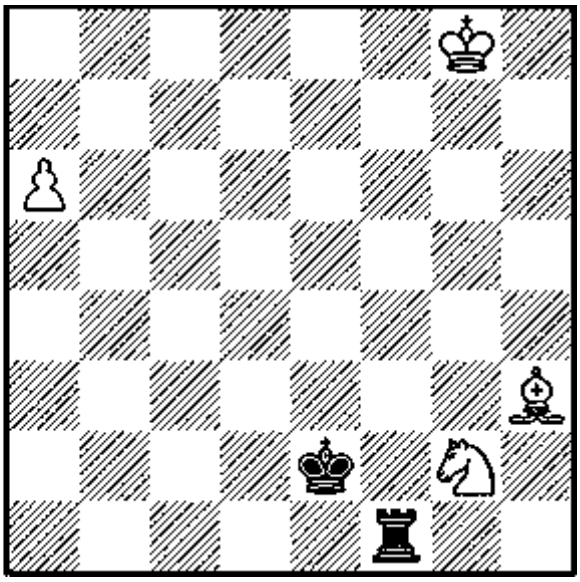
6 Kc6⊙+–.

The cases when weaker pieces dominate stronger ones are, of course, the most impressive.

J. Sulz, 1941

15-107

W



White cannot win by “normal” means because Black attacks the a-pawn with his rook and king in time. For example, 1 Bc8? Kd3 2 Bb7 Ra1 3 Nf4+ Kc4=, or 1 Bd7? Ra1 2 Bb5+ Kf3 3 Nh4+ Ke4=, or 1 Nh4? Ra1 2 Bc8 Kd3 3 Nf5 Kc4=.

1 Nf4+!! R×f4 2 Bd7!+–

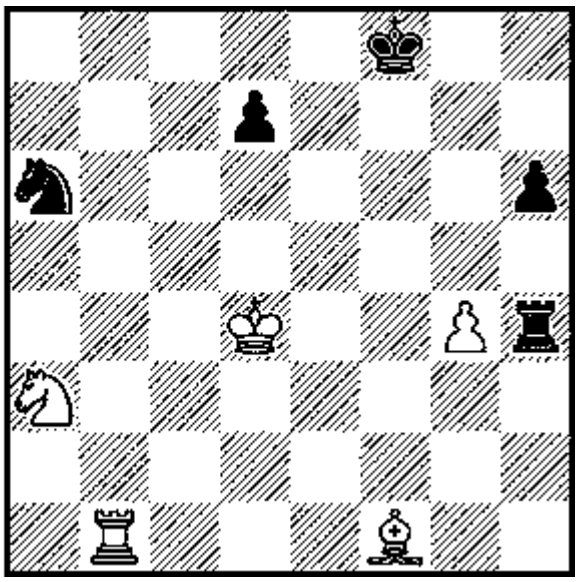
A striking situation: all paths to the a-file and to the eighth rank are closed for the rook on an open board (2…Rf3 3 Bg4; 2…Rf1 3 Bb5+; 3…Rf6 3 a7 Ra6 4 Bb5+).

An equally sudden and striking capture of a rook on an open board is the point of the next study:

Y. Bazlov, 1997

15-108

W



1 Be2!

1 B×a6? R×g4+ and 2…Ra4 is an immediate draw.

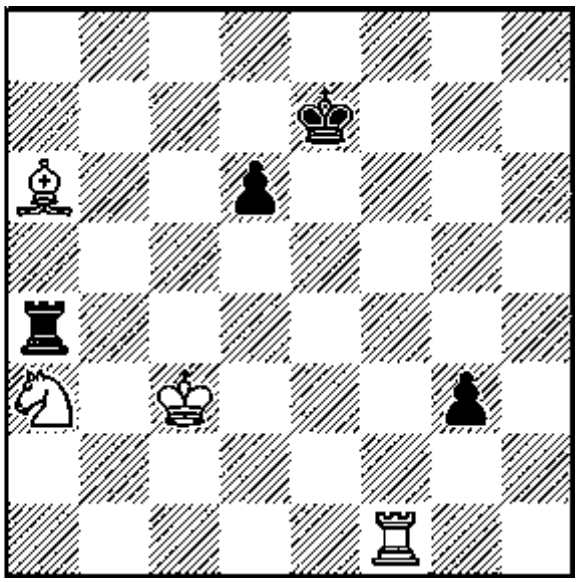
1…h5 2 Ke5! hg

Again, 3 B×a6? enables Black to win the piece back: 3…Rh5+ and 4…Ra5. Of course, White may try to do without capturing on a6 and proceed with three pieces against two. Nobody has analyzed such positions seriously, but some (though not many) practical examples confirm that winning chances exist. However, White has a more forceful method at his disposal.

3 Rf1+! Ke7 4 B×a6 d6+! (4…Rh5+? 5 Rf5+–) **5 Kd4! g3+ 6 Kc3! Ra4**

15-109

W?



7 Nc2!! R×a6 8 Nb4!

The rook has no refuge from knight forks.

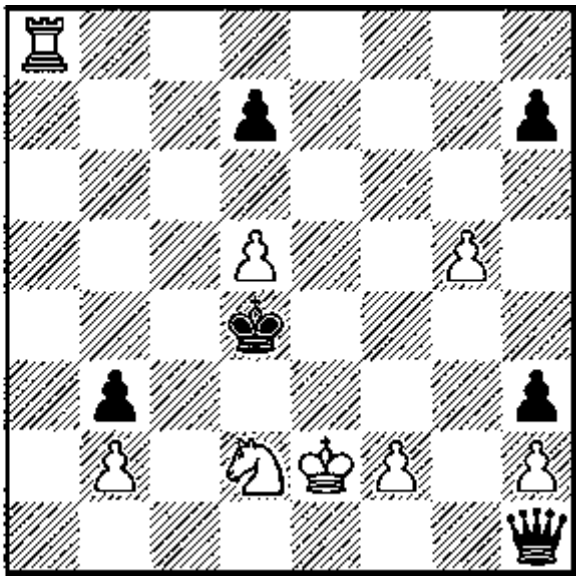
8…Ra3+ (8…Ra8 9 Nd5+) **9 Kb2! Ra4** (9…g2 10 Re1+) **10 Kb3 Ra8 11 Nd5+**, and the rook is lost.

Even a queen can sometimes be caught.

L. Kubbel, 1914

15-110

W?



1 g6! (1 Ra1? Qg2!) **1…hg** (1…Qg2 2 gh Qg4+ 3 Nf3+) **2 Ra1! Qg2**

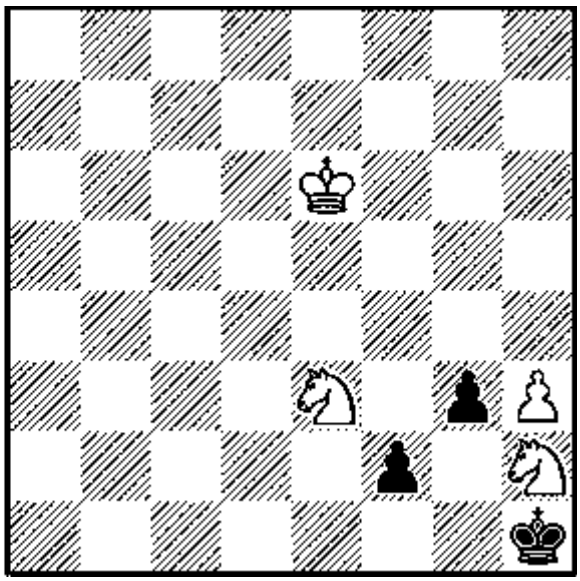
Here and later on the rook cannot be captured in view of a knight fork with loss of the queen. In case of 2…Q×d5, the queen will be lost after 3 Ra4+ Ke5 4 Ra5!. But now the same mechanism works on the kingside.

3 Rg1! Q×d5 4 Rg4+ Kc5 5 Rg5!+–.

Y. Afek, 1997

15-111

W?

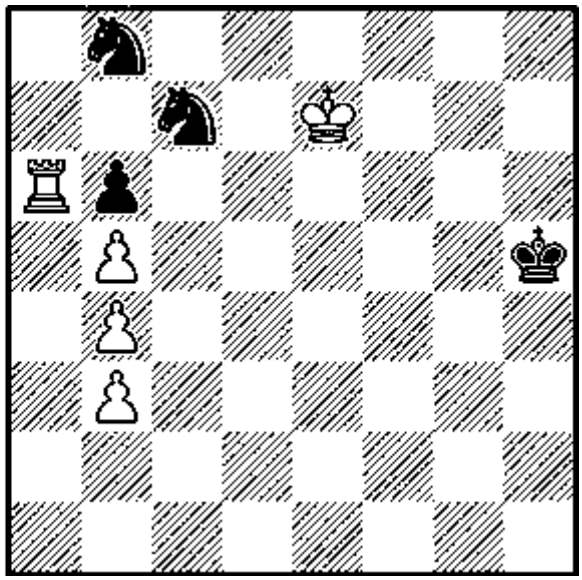


After 1 Nhg4?, Black holds by means of 1…f1Q! 2 N×f1 Kg2! 3 h4 K×f1 4 h5 Ke2! 5 h6 g2=.

1 Nhf1! g2 2 h4!! g1Q 3 Kf7!⊙+–.

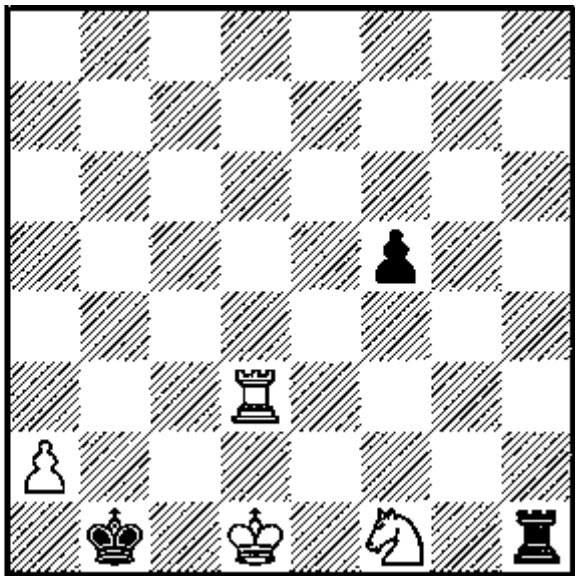
Exercises

15-112



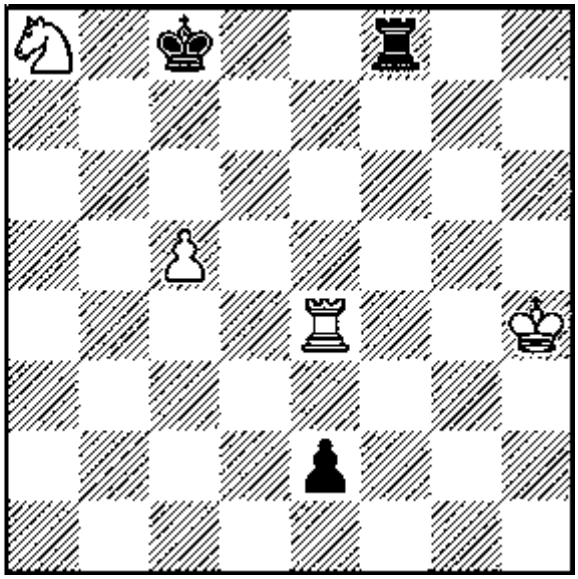
15/38
W?

15-113



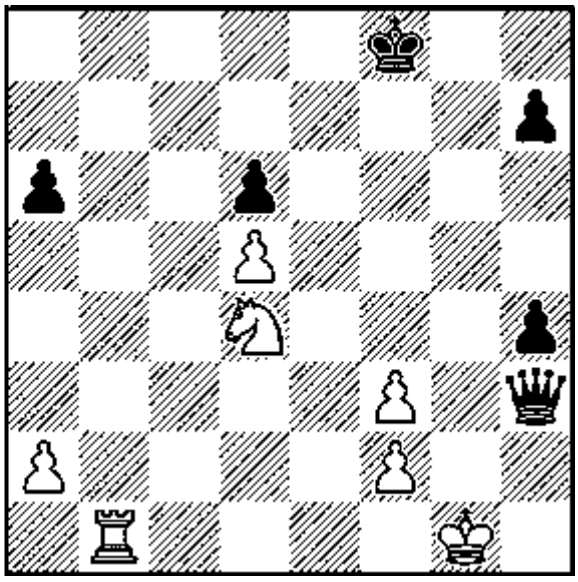
15/39
W?

15-114



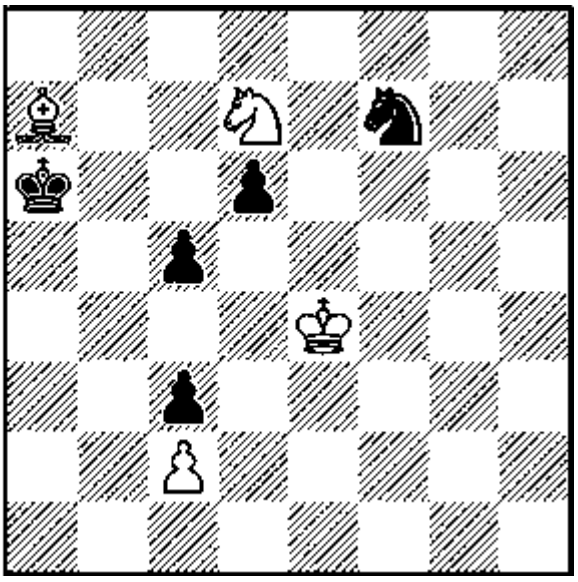
15/40
W?

15-115



15/41
W?/Play

15-116



15/42
W?/Play

Chapter 16

Solutions

Chapter One

1/1. C. Salvioli, 1887

The solution of this exercise is based on the ideas we discussed in diagram 1-7.

1…b4! 2 c4 b3!

2…Ka5? loses to 3 Kb3 Ka6 4 K×b4 Ka7 5 Kb5 Kb7 6 a3! Kc7 7 Ka6 Kc6 8 a4! Kc7 9 Ka7 Kc6 10 Kb8!.

3 a3 (3 ab+ Kb4 and 4…b5=) **3…Ka5 4 K×b3 Ka6 5 Kb4 Ka7! 6 Kb5 Kb7**

Here White has only one spare tempo while in the line 2…Ka5? he had two.

7 a4 Kc7 (7…Ka7?? 8 a5+–) **8 Ka6 Kc6 9 Ka7 Kc7! 10 Ka8 Kc8**=.

1/2. H. Weenink, 1924

1 Ke4 Kg4

How should White continue? If he managed to pass the move to his opponent, he could force a favorable pawn exchange on the kingside (2…Kg5 3 Ke5 Kg4 4 Kf6!, etc.). But how can this be done? 2 Ke5 is useless: 2…Kg5! (2…Kg3? 3 Kf5) 3 Kd4 Kh4!. The only chance is to threaten the b5-pawn!

2 Kd5! Kh5! (2…Kf5 3 Kd4 and Black loses the opposition) **3 Kc6!**

After 3 Kc5 Kg5!, Black still maintains the opposition, while capture of the pawn leads to a draw: 4 K×b5? Kg4 5 Kc5 Kg3 6 b5 K×g2 7 b6 f3=. But what can Black do now? To maintain the opposition, 3…Kg6 is required, but the king is too far from the g2-pawn then and 4 K×b5 wins. Otherwise White seizes his coveted opposition and then transforms the distant opposition into the close one by standard means (outflanking).

3…Kg5 4 Kc5! Kg4 5 Kd6! Kh5 6 Kd5! Kh4 7 Ke6 Kg5 8 Ke5 Kg4 9 Kf6 Kg3 10 Kf5+–.

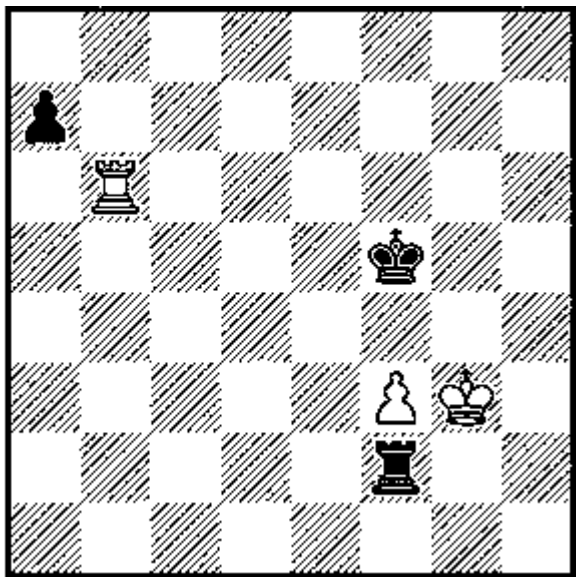
1/3. E. Somov-Nasimovich, 1936

1 Kg3!

1 Kg1? is wrong in view of 1…Bb6 2 Rh5+ Kg6 3 Rh2 R×f2 4 R×f2 a5 5 Kf1 B×f2 6 K×f2 a4–+. Now 1…Bb6 can be met with 2 Nd3!.

1…R×f2! 2 Rh5+! Kg6 3 Rd5 Bb6 4 Rd6+ Kf5 5 R×b6

16-1



B

5…R×f3+! 6 Kg2!! ab 7 K×f3=

Because of the pretty loss of a tempo on move six, White has seized the opposition.

1/4. N. Grigoriev, 1933

1 Ka6 (of course, not 1 b6? Kb7=) **1…Kb8** (1…f4 2 b6+–) **2 g3!**

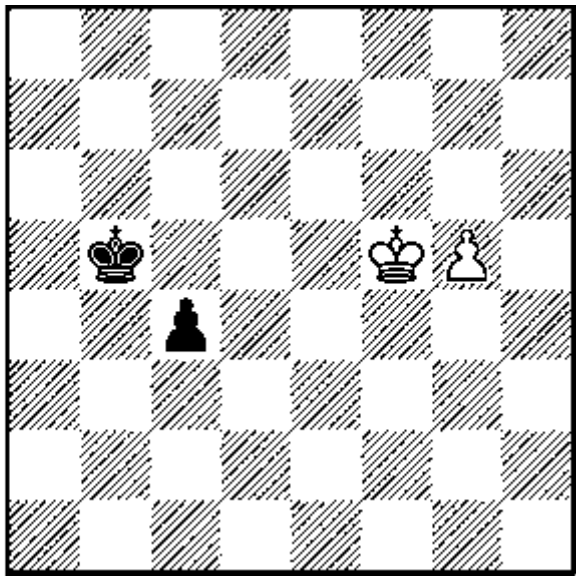
The hasty 2 b6? misses the win: 2…Kc8! (△ 3…cb) 3 b7+ Kb8 4 g3 c5 5 Kb5 K×b7 6 K×c5 Kc7 7 Kd5 f4! 8 gf Kd7=; Black saves the game by seizing the opposition.

2…Ka8

Another defensive method also does not help: 2…Kc8 3 Ka7 Kd8 4 Kb8! (an opposition!) 4…Kd7 5 Kb7 Kd8 (5…Kd6 6 Kc8+–) 6 Kc6 (outflanking!) 6…Kc8 7 Kd5 Kb7 8 Ke5 Kb6 9 K×f5 K×b5 10 g4 c5 11 g5 c4

16-2

W?



12 Ke4! (we shall see this method – decoying the hostile king into a check – more than once in this book) 12…Kb4 13 g6 c3 14 Kd3! Kb3 15 g7 c2 16 g8Q+.

3 b6 Kb8 4 Kb5! (4 b7? c5 5 Kb5 K×b7=) **4…Kb7 5 bc K×c7 6 Kc5 Kd7 7 Kd5**+–

This time White has seized the opposition, therefore the pawn sacrifice 7…f4 is senseless.

1/5. An Ancient Problem

The white king must come closer to the black one, maintaining the opposition. And, when this is impossible, to outflank it along the c-file. In fact, all this is an algorithm that we know already – a transformation of a distant opposition into a close one.

1 Ka2! Kb8! 2 Kb2! Ka8 (2…Ka7 3 Ka3! Kb7 4 Kb3) **3 Kc3! Kb7** (3…Ka7 4 Kc4!) **4 Kb3! Ka7 5 Kc4 Kb8 6 Kb4 Ka8 7 Kc5 Kb7 8 Kb5 Ka7 9 Kc6 Kb8** (9…Ka6 10 Ra1#; 9…Ka8 10 Kc7) **10 Kb6 Ka8 11 Rc8#**.

1/6. M. Dvoretsky, 1976 (based on the themes of an Estrin-Gusev ending, Moscow 1963).

If Black postpones the transition to a pawn ending, playing 1…f4?! (with the idea 2 Ke2 R×d7 3 R×d7? K×d7 4 Kd3 Ke7!, and Black seizes the opposition when the white king enters the fourth rank) he will have serious troubles in the rook-andpawn endgame after 2 Rc2+! K×d7 3 Rc5 Rg8 4 Ke2. He should focus on the task at hand and calculate the following forced drawing line:

1…R×d7! 2 R×d7

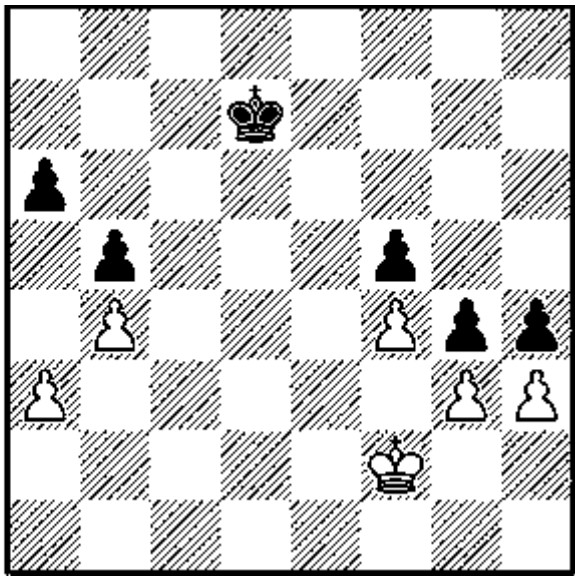
2 Rc2+ Kd6 3 Rc5 Ke6 4 Rc6+ Rd6 is not dangerous for Black.

2…K×d7 3 f4! g4!

After 3…gf? 4 Kf3 Ke6 5 K×f4 Kf6 6 g3, White creates a distant passed pawn that will be decisive. We shall discuss this sort of position later.

4 g3!

16-3



B?

4…gh!!

4…hg+? loses to 5 K×g3 gh 6 K×h3 Ke6 7 Kh4 Kd5 (the pair of mined squares are g5-e4) 8 Kh5! Kd4 9 Kg6! Ke4 10 Kg5+–.

5 gh Ke6 6 Kg3 Kf6 7 h5 (7 K×h3 Kg6=) **7…Kg7 8 K×h3 Kh7! 9 Kg3 Kg7**

The h4- and h6-squares are mined. White cannot win because 10 Kf3 Kh6 11 Ke3? K×h5 12 Kd4 Kh4! 13 Kd5 Kg3 14 Ke5 Kg4⊙ is bad.

1/7. Taimanov-Botvinnik, USSR ch tt, Moscow 1967

1…Rg4! 2 R×g4 (2 R×a6 R×h4–+) **2…hg 3 Kg2 g5!**

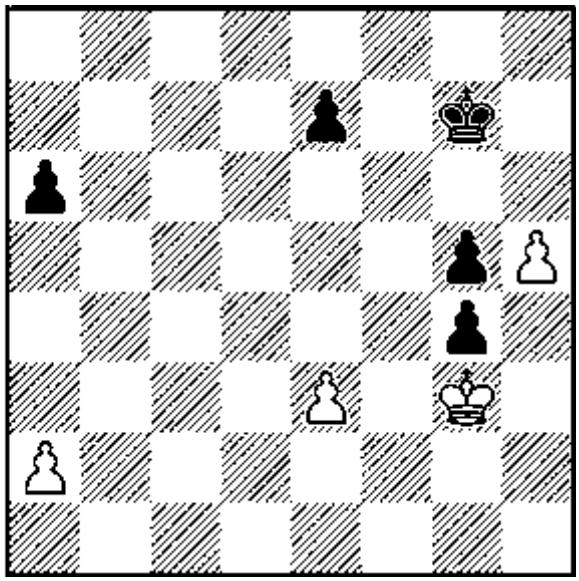
3…Kf6 4 Kg3 Kf5? (it is not too late for Black to play 4…g5!) is wrong: 5 e4+! K×e4 6 K×g4 e5 7 Kg5 Kf3 8 K×g6 e4 9 h5=.

4 h5

4 Kg3 Kg6 5 K×g4 does not help: 5…gh 6 K×h4 Kf5 7 Kg3 Ke4 8 Kf2 a5!? (rather than 8…Kd3 9 Kf3 e5? 10 a3=) 9 Ke2 a4 10 a3 e6! 11 Kd2 Kf3 12 Kd3 e5⊙–+.

4…Kg7 5 Kg3

16-4



B?

5…Kh7!

The situation is very much like that in the game Alekhine-Yates (diagram 1-22). 5…a5? would have been a grave error in view of 6 K×g4 Kh6 7 e4 and it is Black who is in zugzwang.

6 K×g4 Kh6 7 e4

White resigned in view of 7…a5 8 a4 e5 9 Kf5 K×h5 10 K×e5 g4 11 Kf4 Kh4 12 e5 g3 13 e6 g2 14 e7 g1Q 15 e8Q Qf2+ 16 Ke5 Qe2+, winning the queen.

1/8. N. Grigoriev, 1920

The c3- and e3-squares are obviously corresponding.

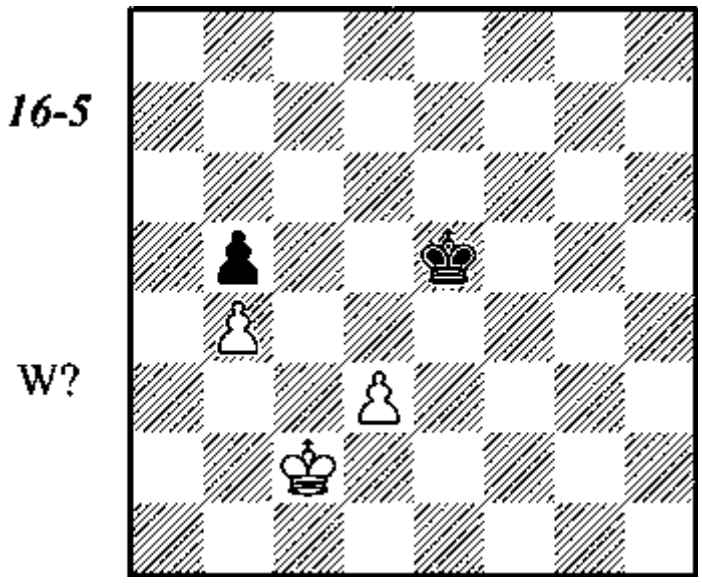
The white king will break through to e3 in order to set the d-pawn in motion; the black king will confront it from the f3-square. The reciprocal zugzwang arises when the kings are on d2 and f3, so another pair of corresponding squares is defined. The third pair – c2 and f4 – is adjacent to those already known. Finally, we come to the squares b3 and b2, which can be used for ceding the move because the single square (f3) corresponds to them.

1 Kc2!

Rather than 1 d4? Ke4 2 Kc3 Kf5! 3 Kd3 Kf4=.

1…Kf4! 2 Kb3(b2)! Kf3 3 Kb2(b3)!⊙ Kf4 4 Kc2! Ke5

4…Ke3? is quite bad in view of 5 Kc3⊙; 4…Kf3 5 Kd2⊙ is also inferior.



Now we must discover a new subtlety: there is a reciprocal zugzwang when the kings are on d2 and d4, so the mined square d2 should be avoided.

5 Kd1! (5 Kd2?! Kd4 6 Ke2? Kc3=) **5…Kd5 6 Ke2 Kd4 7 Kd2 Ke5! 8 Ke3 Kd5 9 d4 Kc4**

Black's only hope is to attack the b4-pawn. His pawn would promote simultaneously, but unfortunately the new queen is immediately lost.

10 Ke4 K×b4 11 d5 Kc5 12 Ke5 b4 13 d6 b3 (13…Kc6 14 Ke6 makes no difference) **14 d7 b2 15 d8Q b1Q 16 Qc7+ Kb4 17 Qb7+**

It is worth mentioning that 11…Ka3 (instead of 11…Kc5) 12 d6 b4 does not save Black – a queen versus knight pawn endgame is winning. But if we shift the initial position one file to the right, then Black, with the bishop pawn against the queen, holds. We shall discuss this sort of position later.

1/9. B. Neuenschwander, 1985

1 Kh4?, with the idea 2 g5, for example, 1…Kh6? 2 g5+ Kh7 3 Kg4+– or 1…f6? 2 g5!+–, does not win in view of 1…g6! 2 Kg5 Kg7! (rather than 2…gh? 3 gh and White creates a distant passed pawn) 3 Kf4 f6!=.

The natural plan is an attack against the d5-pawn, but it should be conducted very carefully. White must take Black's counterplay (g7-g6) into account.

1 Kf5? is wrong in view of 1…Kh6 and White is in zugzwang. 2 Ke5 is met with 2…Kg5 3 K×d5 K×g4=, and 2 Kf4 – with 2…g6! 3 hg (3 Ke5 gh 4 gh K×h5 5 K×d5 f5=) 3…K×g6 4 Ke5 Kg5 5 K×d5 K×g4=.

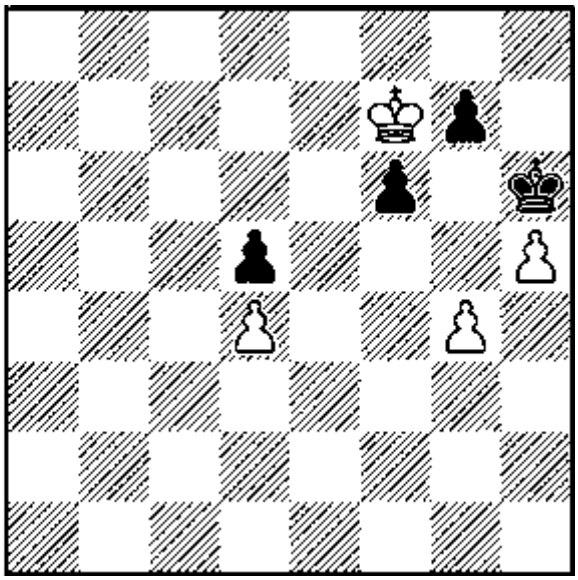
However Black could have had serious difficulties if he was on move when the kings were on f5 and h6. We come to the conclusion that these squares are mined.

1 Kf4! Kh6 2 Kf5!⊙ f6!□ 3 Ke6 Kg5 4 Kf7! Kh6

4…K×g4? 5 K×g7 K×h5 (5…f5 6 h6) 6 K×f6 was bad, but what should White do now?

16-6

W?



The answer is rather simple: he uses triangulation in order to pass the move to Black.

5 Ke7! (rather than 5 Ke8? g6) **5…Kg5 6 Kf8! Kh6** (6…g6 7 Kg7!+–) **7 Kf7⊙ Kh7 8 Ke6 Kh6 9 K×d5**+–.

1/10. R. Réti, 1929

First let us try 1 Kc6 g5! 2 Kb7 (2 hg h4–+). Black wins by means of 2…g4! because his pawn promotes with check. Now we notice that if the black king is on f6, White may play Kc6 because he exchanges on g5 with check, avoiding Black's promotion on g1.

White cannot prevent …g6-g5, but does this move invariably win? Assume that the black king has just taken the white pawn on g5 and White has replied with Kg3. Now we calculate: 1…Kf5 2 Kh4 Ke5 3 K×h5 Kd5 4 Kg4 Kc5 5 Kf3 K×b5 6 Ke2 Kc4 7 Kd2 Kb3 8 Kc1 with a draw. White has made it just in time! This means that he would have lost if his king were slightly further away from the h5-pawn (say, on f3).

We know enough to define the corresponding squares. The simplest reciprocal zugzwang is with the kings on f4 and f6: Black, if on move, cannot achieve anything, while otherwise White is lost: 1 Ke4 g5–+ or 1 Kg3 Ke5–+.

The correspondence between the e5- and f7-squares is less evident. Actually, if Black is on move, 1…Ke7 is met with 2 Kd5 Kf6, and now 3 Kc6!=, profiting from the fact that the black king is unfortunately placed on f6. But what if White is on move? If 1 Kf4, then 1…Kf6–+, while after 1 Kd5, Black wins by means of 1…g5! 2 hg Kg6 3 Ke4 (3 Kc6 h4) 3…K×g5 4 Kf3 Kf5.

Using the neighborhood principle, the third pair of corresponding squares is g7-e4. When the black king is on e7, White plays Kd5.

1 Kd5! (1 Ke6? g5–+; 1 Ke5? Kf7⊙–+) **1…Kf7**

Or 1…Kg7 2 Ke4! Kf6 3 Kf4 Ke7!? 4 Ke3!=, rather than 4 Ke5? Kf7⊙–+ or 4 Kg5? Kf7 5 Kf4 Kf6⊙–+.

2 Ke5! Ke7 3 Kd5! Kf6 (3…Kd7 4 Ke5 Kc7 5 Kd5!=) **4 Kc6! g5 5 hg+ K×g5 6 Kb7**=.

1/11. M. Zinar, 1987

While both kings travel to the queenside, they must be aware of the pair of mined squares c4-d6. If the white king should arrive safely at d3, a drawing situation with untouchable pawns arises. However, we should take into account the utmost importance of the potential reciprocal zugzwang position with the kings on e4 and f6 that may occur. Analyzing all this, we discover the correspondence of the squares f4-g6 and g4-h6 and come to the conclusion that an anti-opposition takes place here.

1 Kg5? Kg7 2 Kf5 Kf7 3 Ke4 (3 Ke5 Ke7⊙–+) 3…Kf6!⊙ 4 Kd3 (4 Kf4 c4 5 Ke4 c3 6 Kd3 Ke5–+) 4…Ke5 5 Kc4 Kd6⊙–+;

1 Kg4? Kh6!! 2 Kf5 (2 Kf4 Kg6 3 Ke5 Kf7) 2…Kg7 3 Kf4 Kg6! 4 Ke5 Kf7! 5 Ke4 Kf6⊙–+;

1 Kg3!! Kh6! 2 Kg4! Kg7! 3 Kf3! (3 Kf4? Kg6!–+) **3…Kg6 4 Kf4! Kf7 5 Ke3! Kf6 6 Ke4!⊙**

Ke7 7 Kd3 Kd7 8 Kc3=.

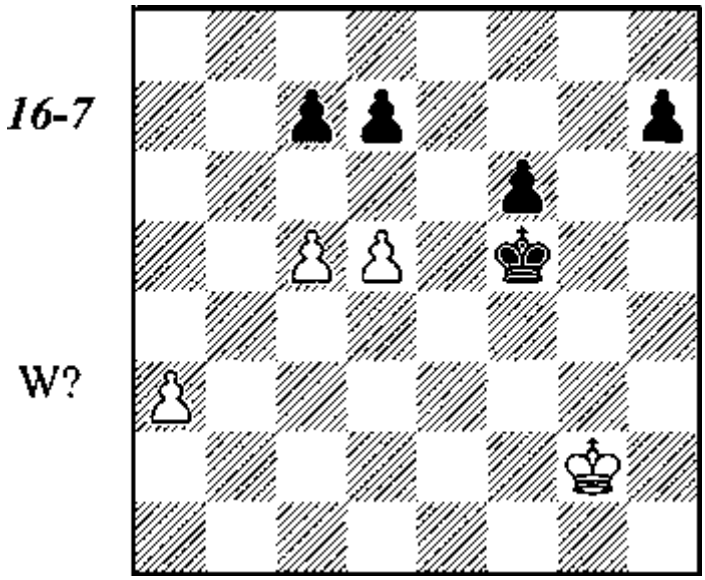
1/12. A. Troitsky, 1913

White must eliminate the g2-pawn; after the premature 1 a4? ba 2 ba Kg3! 3 a4 h5, his king will be mated.

However, after 1 K×g2? Kg5 2 a4 ba 3 ba, the black king enters the square of the a-pawn and arrives in time to hold the eighth rank: 3…Kf6! 4 a4 Ke7! 5 a5 (or 5 Kf3) 5…Kd8, etc.

1 f6! gf 2 K×g2! Kg5 3 a4 ba 4 ba Kf5

The eighth rank is not available anymore; Black must use the fifth rank. However, White creates barriers to this route, too.



5 a4

5 d6? cd 6 a4 is premature in view of 6…Ke6! 7 c6 dc 8 a5 Kd7.

5…Ke5 6 d6! (rather than 6 c6? d6!) **6…cd 7 c6! dc 8 a5 Kd5 9 a6**+–.

1/13. Gustavson-Bata, cr 1985

1 Kg8!! (1 h5? Kf7!–+) **1…K×f5** (1…c4 2 h5) **2 Kg7! Kg4** (otherwise 3 h5=) **3 Kg6! K×h4 4 Kf5**=

None of this actually happened. Even though the game was played by mail, White failed to find the saving maneuver and resigned!

1/14. T. Gorgiev, 1928

1 g4+! Kg5! (1…K×g4 2 Kg6 c5 3 h4=) **2 Kg7!**

The premature 2 h4+? loses to 2…K×h4! 3 Kg6 K×g4 4 Kf6 Kf4 5 Ke6 Ke4–+.

2…c5 3 h4+! K×g4 (3…K×h4 4 Kf6) **4 Kg6! K×h4 5 Kf5**=.

1/15. N. Grigoriev, 1937

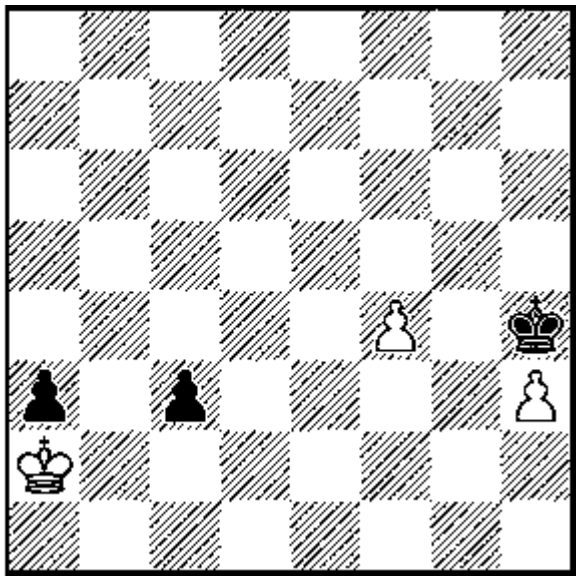
1 h3 c5 2 Kb1 c4 3 Ka2

Black's has not managed to unite his pawns, so he relies on the Réti idea!

3…c3

16-8

W?



4 Kb3!!

After 4 K×a3?, Black holds by means of the Réti maneuver: 4…Kg3! 5 f5 Kf4! 6 f6 Ke3 7 Kb3 Kd3 8 f7 c2 9 f8Q c1Q=. By postponing the pawn capture, White gets the same position but with his king on a more favorable square: a2 instead of a3.

4…a2□ 5 K×a2 Kg3 6 f5 Kf3

If 6…Kf4, then 7 f6 Ke3 8 f7 c2 9 f8Q c1Q (the pawn is promoted without check) 10 Qh6+, winning the new queen.

7 Kb1!+–

Another advantage of the king's position on a2! The Réti idea could have worked after both 7 f6? Ke2! and 7 Kb3? Ke4!.

1/16. Lickleder-Dvoretsky, Germany tt 1997

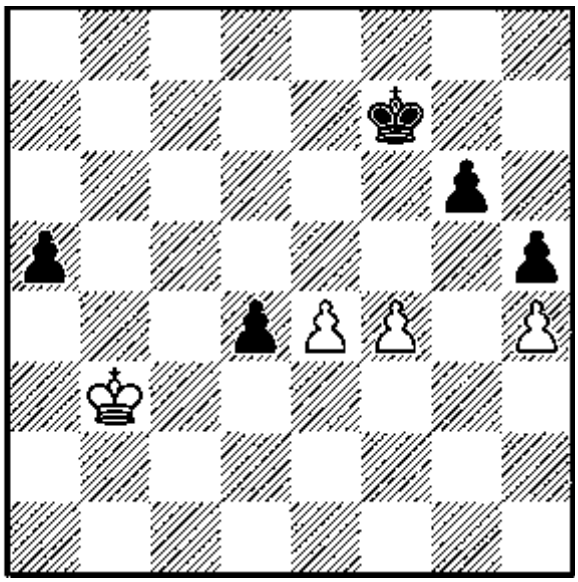
1…Q×e4! 2 de a5!

White resigned in view of 3 c3 d3 4 c4 a4–+ or 3 Kb3 c5 4 Kc4 (4 c3 d3; 4 c4 Ke6⊙) 4…a4 5 c3 a3 6 Kb3 d3–+.

2…c5? would have been a grave error in view of 3 c3!. Now 3…d3? loses to 4 c4 a5 5 Kc3. 3…dc+ 4 K×c3 a5 is an obvious draw, while after 3…a5 4 cd cd 5 Kb3, White is threatening to eliminate all the queenside pawns.

16-9

B?



However, Black still has a draw: 5…g5!! 6 fg Ke6 7 Kc4 Ke5 8 g6 Kf6 9 K×d4 K×g6=.

1/17. Ravikumar-Nielsen, Esbjerg 1980

Black has a single way to a draw.

1…Kb7! (△ 2…dc) **2 a6+** (2 cd cd=; 2 b6 cb!=) **2…Ka7! 3 b6+ K×a6! 4 bc Kb7 5 cd Kc8**=

All other moves lose:

1…dc? 2 b6 c4 (2…cb 3 a6 c4 4 d6 c3 5 d7 Kc7 6 a7+–) 3 a6 c3 4 a7+ Kb7 5 bc+–;

1…Kc8? 2 a6! △ 3.b6+–;

1…Ka7? 2 b6+ Kb7 (2…cb 3 cd+–;) 3 bc+–;;

1…Ka8? (this was played in the actual game) 2 b6 Kb7 3 bc K×c7 4 cd+ Black resigned.

1/18. M. Rauch

The winning method is not complicated: White should pass the move to his opponent by means of triangulation. Then he will be able to advance his pawns so that they can decide the fight without the king's help.

1 Kf1! Kd3 2 Kg2 Kd4 3 Kg1! Kd3 4 Kf1⊙ Kd4 5 Ke2⊙ Kd5 6 Ke3 Kd6 7 f4 Kd5 8 b4+– (the pawn square has reached the edge of the board).

1/19. Bologan-Vokác, Ostrava 1993

The game continued 1 B×g2? hg 2 Kb7 g1Q 3 a7. As we know from the discussion at diagram 1-62, White is lost here: the black king comes in time to set up a mating attack.

3…Qb1+ 4 Ka8 Qc2 (4…Qh7 would have made the process shorter) 5 Kb7 Qb3+ 6 Ka8 Qc4 7 Kb7 Qb5+ 8 Ka8 Qc6+ 9 Kb8 Kd6! White resigned.

Baron has shown that White could hold the draw by retaining his bishop.

1 Kb8! g1Q 2 a7 Qg8+ 3 Kc7 (3 Bc8? Qb3+ 4 Bb7 h2–+) **3…Qf7+ 4 Kb6!**=.

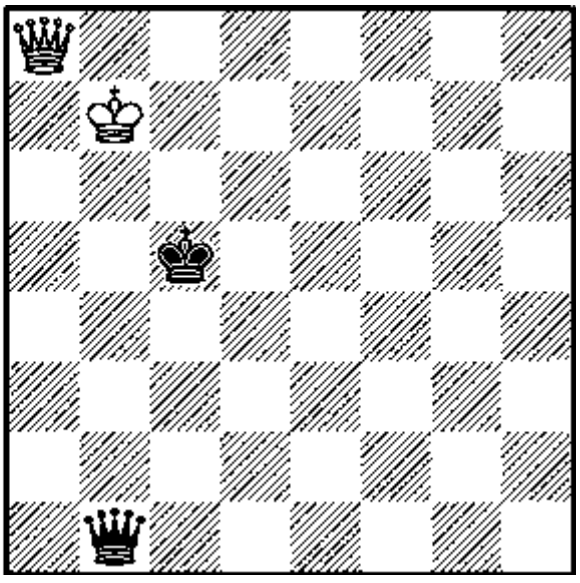
1/20. A. Botokanov, 1985

1 Kf6? Kg3 2 Kg5 K×g2 3 K×h4 K×f3 would be bad, as Black's king would get to the queenside first.

1 Kf7! Kg3 2 Kg8! K×g2 (2…h3? 3 gh K×h3 4 Kf7+–) **3 f4 h3 4 f5 h2 6 f6 h1Q 7 f7**, and there is no win for Black, for example, 7…Qh6 8 f8Q Q×f8+ 9 K×f8 Kf3 10 Ke7 Ke4 11 Kd6 Kd4 12 Kc6 Kc4 13 Kb6 K×b4 14 K×a6 Kc5 15 Kb7 b4 16 a6 b3 17 a7 b2 18 a8Q b1Q+

16-10

W?



19 Kc8! (but not 19 Kc7? Qh7+, and mate is forced) 19…Qf5+ 20 Kb8! Qf4+ 21 Ka7!=.

1/21. A. Troitsky, 1935*

1 Ke5!

1 Kc5? loses after 1…Rd8 2 e7 Re8 3 Kd6 (3 K×c4 g3 or 3…e3 4 Kd3 Kf2) 3…e3 4 R×c4 g3 5 Re4 Kf2.

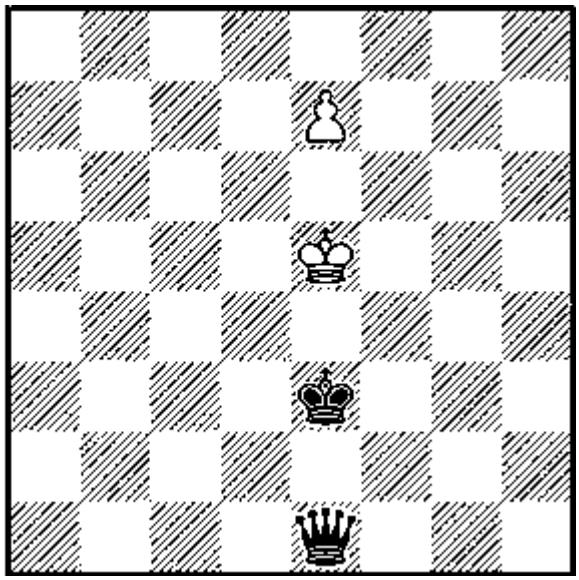
1…e3 (1…Rd8 2 K×e4=) **2 R×c4** (2 e7? e2–+) **2…e2 3 R×g4+**

3 Re4? Kf2 4 e7 e1Q 5 R×e1 K×e1 6 Kf4 Rf3+ 7 Ke4 Ke2–+.

3…Kf2 4 Re4 (4 Rf4+ Rf3 5 Re4 is equivalent) **4…Re3! 5 R×e3 K×e3 6 e7 e1Q**

16-11

W?



7 Ke6! Kf4+ (7…Kd4+ 8 Kd7!=) **8 Kf7!**=.

1/22. J. Timman, 1988

After 1 Kb3? Kd5 2 Kb4 Ke5 3 Kb5 K×f5 4 Ka6 Ke6 5 K×a7 f5, an endgame of "queen versus rook pawn" arises. The black king is close enough to the queenside to set up mate: 6 a4 f4 7 a5 f3 8 a6 f2 9 Kb8 f1Q 10 a7 Qb5+ 11 Kc7 Qd7+ 12 Kb8 Kd6 13 a8Q Qc7#.

1 a4! a5

After 1…Kd5 2 Kb4, White has an extra tempo in comparison with the previous annotation.

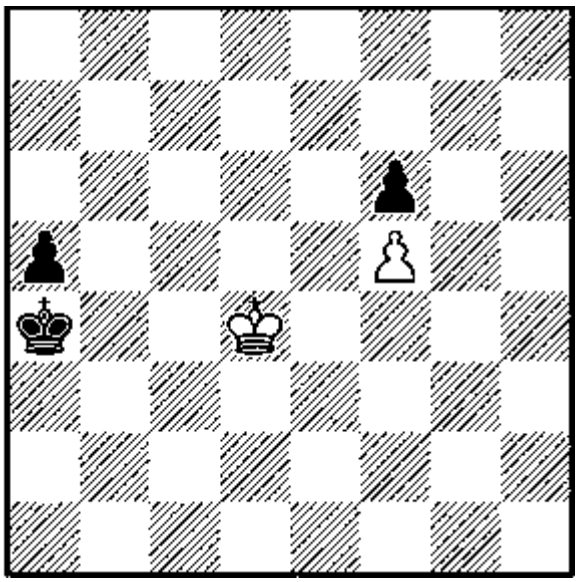
2 Kd3!

2 Kb3? Kd4 is quite bad. Black is at a crossroads now. The line 2…Kd5 3 Kc3 Ke5 4 Kc4 K×f5 5 Kb5 leads to a mutual promotion, while after 2…Kb4, the white king will be able to attack the f6-pawn.

2…Kb4 3 Kd4 K×a4

16-12

W?



4 Kc4!!

A necessary subtlety! It is important to push the black king as far away as possible from the f-pawn. The straightforward continuation 4 Kd5? loses to 4…Kb5! 5 Ke6 a4 6 K×f6 a3 7 Ke7 (unfortunately he cannot go to g7 because Black then promotes with check) 7…a2 8 f6 a1Q 9 f7 Qg7 10 Ke8 Kc6 11 f8Q Qd7#.

4…Ka3 5 Kd5 a4 6 Ke6 Kb4 7 K×f6 a3 8 Ke7! a2 9 f6 a1Q 10 f7=

When on b4, the black king is no longer dangerous!

1/23. Salwe-Flamberg, Petersburg 1914

One's first impression might be that Black wins in all lines, but this is far from so. Only the pretty move **1…Nh4!!**, as was actually played, decides.

After 2 K×h4 Kb4, Black promotes first and prevents White from promoting.

Black cannot create a similar situation by means of 1…Kb4? 2 K×f3 a5. White plays 3 Ke3 Kb3 4 Kd2, either coming with his king to c1 or forcing the black king to occupy the b2-square and interfering with the a1-h8 diagonal.

1…Ne5+ 2 Kf5 Kb4? also does not win (2…Nf3! 3 Kg4 Nh4! is necessary) 3 h4 a5 4 h5. All lines lead to a drawn endgame of "queen versus rook pawn." For example, 4…Nf7 5 Kg6 Nh6 6 K×h6 a4 7 Kg7! a3 8 h6 a2 9 h7 a1Q+ 10 Kg8=, or 4…Nd7 5 h6 Nf8 6 Kf6 a4 7 Kf7! (7 Kg7? Ne6+ 8 Kf6 a3–+) 7…Nh7 8 Kg6! (8 Kg7? Ng5–+) 8…Nf8+ 9 Kf7!=.

1/24. A. Khachaturov, 1947 (after N. Grigoriev, 1930)

Who finishes first in the coming breathtaking pawn race? White can win only if he promotes with check.

1 f5! Kc5 2 h5!

Rather than 2 f6? Kd6, and the black king enters the square of the h-pawn.

2…g3 3 Ke1!

This is essential for postponing an eventual check from the d-pawn for as long as possible.

3…d4 4 f6! Kd6 5 h6!

White's technique is becoming clear. First the f-pawn is advanced, threatening to promote with check (its mission is to decoy the black king to the eighth rank), then it is time for the h-pawn. If 5…d3 now (without check!), then 6 f7 Ke7 7 h7.

5…g2 6 Kf2 d3 7 f7! Ke7 8 h7 g1Q+ 9 K×g1 d2 10 f8Q+! K×f8 11 h8Q+

1/25. J. Moravec, 1950

This exercise will be easy if one recollects the study by Timman (diagram 1-63).

1 Kd5!!

Rather than 1 K×d6? e4 2 c4 e3 3 c5 e2 4 c6 e1Q 5 Kd7 Qd1+! 6 Kc8 Qg4+.

1…Kf3 (1…Kg3 2 Ke4 △ 3 c4=) **2 K×d6! e4 3 c4 e3 4 c5 e2 5 c6 e1Q 6 Kd7! Qd1+ 7 Kc8!** with an inevitable 8 c7=.

1/26. E. Dvizov, 1965

1 Kf6? is only good enough for a draw: 1…Kg8! 2 g6 b3! 3 h6 b2 4 h7+ Kh8 5 g7+ K×h7 6 Kf7 b1Q 7 g8Q+ Kh6.

1 Kg6!! Kg8

1…b3 2 Kf7 b2 3 g6 b1Q 4 g7+ Kh7 5 g8Q+ Kh6 6 Qg6+! Q×g6 7 hg c3 8 g7 c2 9 g8Q c1Q 10 Qg6#.

2 h6 b3

After 2…c3, White mates as in the previous note: 3 h7+ Kh8 4 Kf7! c2 5 g6 c1Q 6 g7+ K×h7 7 g8Q+ Kh6 8 Qg6#.

Now not a queen, but a pawn mates:

3 h7+ Kh8 4 Kh6! b2 5 g6 b1Q 6 g7#.

1/27. N. Grigoriev, 1931

1 h4!

White should keep the black pawn structure in a compact mass which can be comfortably attacked by the king. The premature 1 Kf7? misses the win: 1…g5! 2 Kg7 Kb3 3 K×h7 Kc4 4 Kg6 g4! 5 Kg5 Kd5 6 K×g4 Ke6 7 Kg5 Kf7=. Now, however, White arrives in time: 1…Kb3 2 Kf7 Kc4 3 K×g7 h5 4 Kg6 Kd5 5 K×h5 Ke6 6 Kg6+–. 1…h6 2 h5 is also hopeless for Black. But the fight is still not over.

1…h5!

With the idea 2 Kf7? g5 3 hg h4=. However, if the a2-g8 diagonal remains open, the white pawn promotes with check.

2 Kf8! g6 3 Ke7!+–

The only way to attack the g-pawn without fearing 3…g5. From f7, the king interferes with the diagonal, while from g7, with its own pawn.

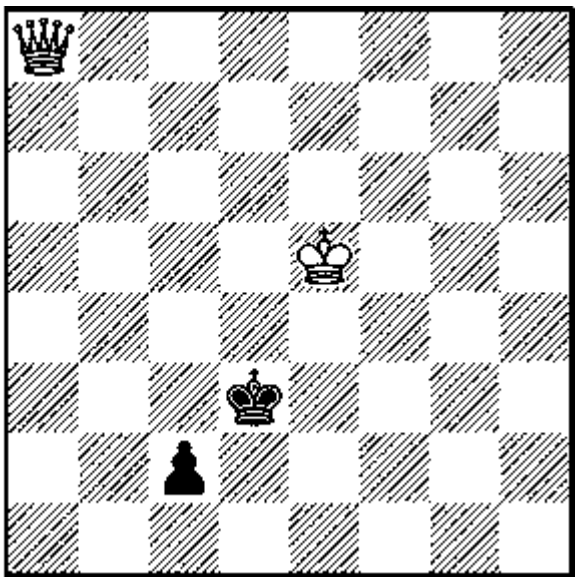
1/28. N. Grigoriev, 1932

1 Kf5! Ke3 2 Ke5 c6!

The only possibility to resist. 2…Kd3? 3 Kd5 Kc3 4 Kc5 loses immediately.

3 a4 Kd3 4 a5 c5 5 a6 c4 6 a7 c3 7 a8Q c2

16-13



W?

Black is close to saving the game, for example:

8 Qa3+? Kd2 9 Qa2 Kc3!= (9…Kd1? 10 Kd4 c1Q 11 Kd3+–);

8 Qe4+? Kd2 9 Qd4+ (9 Qd5+ Ke1!) 9…Ke2 (9…Kc1 is also possible) 10 Qc3 Kd1 11 Qd3+ Kc1 12 Kd4 Kb2 13 Qe2 Ka1!= (rather than 13…Kb1? 14 Kc3! c1Q+ 15 Kb3+–).

Nevertheless, White can win this position in the following way:

8 Qd5+!! Ke3

8…Kc3 9 Qd4+ Kb3 10 Qa1+–; 8…Ke2 9 Qa2! Kd1 (9…Kd3 10 Qb2 Kd2 11 Kd4) 10 Kd4! c1Q 11 Kd3+–.

9 Qg2! c1Q (9…Kd3 10 Qg5+–) **10 Qg5+**

A similar finale happened in the study by Elkies (diagram 1-64).

According to Vardan Pogosyan, the American mathematician Orrin Frink, five years before Grigoriev's study, had published a position that coincides (as a mirror image) with the one that arose after the second move in Grigoriev's study. There is no doubt that Grigoriev knew nothing about the predecessor, but nevertheless it is Frink who should be rightly regarded as the author of the well-known study that we have just examined.

1/29. J. Speelman, 1979

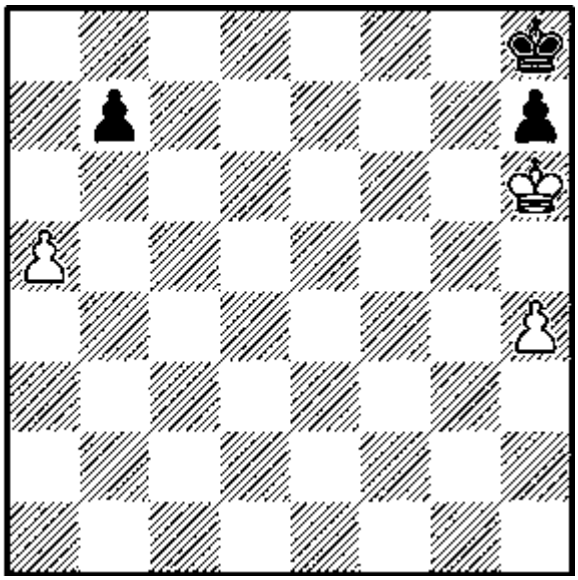
With 1 Ke5? White forces his opponent to open the way to one of the pawns for the king. However, the line 1…Kd7! 2 Kf6 (2 Kd5 is useless in view of 2…Kc7 or 2…h5) 2…Kc6 3 h4 Kb5 4 h5 K×a5 5 Kg7 b5 leads only to a draw.

Notice that White has missed, by a single tempo, promoting first and then winning the hostile queen. Thus, the same zugzwang position, but with the pawn on h4 (rather than h3), would have been winning.

After 1 h4? Kf7 2 h5 h6, this goal cannot be reached because it is Black who seizes the opposition. White must act more subtly.

16-14

W?



4 Kh5!

After 4 Kg5? Kg7, it is Black again who holds the opposition. Another line that does not work is 4 h5? Kg8 5 Kg5 Kf7 (or 5…Kg7 6 h6+ Kf7 7 Kf5 Ke7 8 Ke5 Kd7 9 Kf6 Kd6! 10 Kg7 Ke7 11 K×h7 Kf7=) 6 Kf5 (6 Kf4 Ke6) 6…h6=.

4…Kg8 (4…Kg7 5 Kg5) **5 Kg4!**

White seizes the distant opposition and, by means of the usual outflanking procedure, transforms it into the close opposition.

5…Kf8 6 Kf4 Ke8 7 Kg5!

Rather than 7 Ke4? Kd7! and Black holds: 8 Kf5 Kc6= or 8 Kd5 h5=.

7…Kf7 8 Kf5 Ke7 9 Ke5⊙

White has successfully achieved his goal and, as a result of zugzwang, breaks through to one of Black's pawns.

9…Kd7 10 Kf6 Kc6 11 h5 Kb5 12 Kg7 K×a5 13 K×h7 b5 14 h6 b4 15 Kg7! b3 16 h7 b2 17 h8Q b1Q 18 Qa8+ Kb4 19 Qb8+.

1/30. Yermolinsky-Komarov, USSR 1986

It is no easy matter to utilize the extra pawn to win. White found a superb solution: he opened the way for his king to the queenside.

1 f4+!! gf+ 2 Kf3! fe 3 fe! Kd5 4 Kf4 Ke6 5 e4 fe 6 K×e4

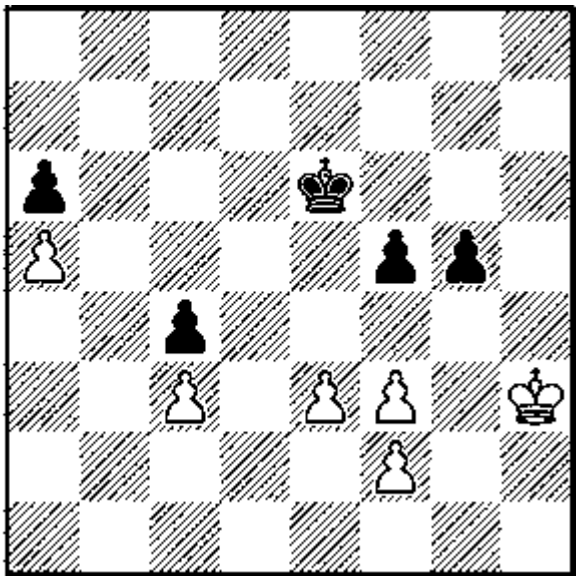
Black resigned. White captures the c4-pawn unimpeded and advances his pawn to c6, achieving the position from Fahrni-Alapin (diagram 1-27).

Let us consider another attempt to make progress: triangulation.

1 Kg2 Kd5 (1…Ke6? 2 e4+–) 2 Kh3 Ke6! After 2…Ke5? 3 Kg3⊙, White's idea turns out to be successful: 3…Ke6 4 f4 g4 5 f3 gf 6 K×f3 Kd5 7 e4+ fe+ 8 Ke3+–.

16-15

W



(a) 3 f4?! gf 4 ef Kd5! 5 f3 Kc5 6 Kh4 Kb5 7 Kg5 Ka4! 8 K×f5 Kb3 9 Kg6 (9 Ke4) 9…K×c3 leads to a queen-and-pawn endgame with an extra pawn for White. 4…Kf6? is wrong in view of 5 Kh4! Kg6 6 f3⊙ Kh6 7 Kg3 Kh5 8 Kf2 Kh4 9 Kg2 Kh5 10 Kg3⊙ Kg6 11 Kf2 Kh5 12 Ke3 Kh4 13 Kd4 Kg3 14 Ke5 K×f3 15 K×f5 Ke3 16 Ke5+–. 5 Kg3? is less accurate; White can achieve only the same queen-and-pawn endgame as above: 5…Kg6! 6 Kh4 (6 Kf3 Kh5 7 Ke3 Kg4 8 Kd4 K×f4 9 K×c4 Kf3 10 Kd5 K×f2 11 Ke5 Ke3=) 6…Kh6 7 Kh3 Kg7! 8 Kg2 Kf6(f7)! 9 Kf3 Ke6 10 Kg3 Kd5 11 f3 Kc5 12 Kh4 Kb5 13 Kg5 Ka4!?, etc.

(b) 3 e4?! fe 4 fe Ke5 5 f3 Kf4 6 e5! (6 Kg2 g4 7 fg K×g4=) 6…K×f3 (6…K×e5? 7 Kg4 Kf6 8 f4+–) 7 e6 g4+ 8 Kh2 (8 Kh4) 8…Kf2 9 e7 g3+ 10 Kh3 g2 11 e8Q g1Q 12 Qf7+ and 13 Q×c4. Again, White has an extra pawn in the queen-and-pawn endgame, and again it is not clear whether this advantage is sufficient for a win.

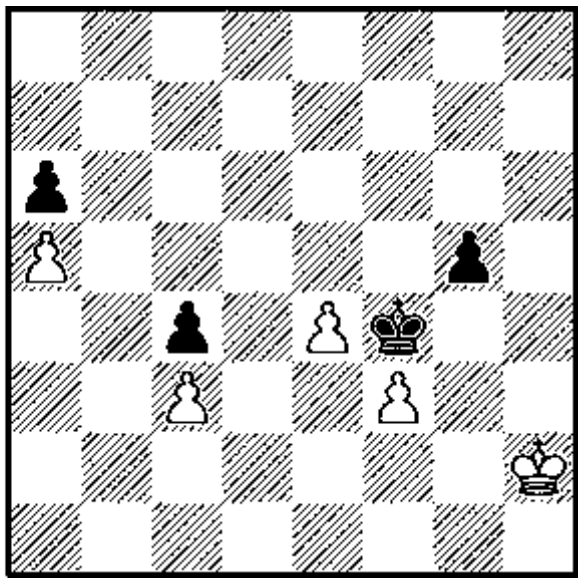
(c) The best option is a return to Yermolinsky's plan: 3 Kg3! Ke5 4 f4+!! gf+ 5 Kf3!+–.

Nevertheless, as grandmaster Naer has demonstrated, an "alternative solution" exists: White should play e3-e4 when the king is standing on h2 (rather than on h3 as in the (b) line).

1 Kh2! Ke6 (1…Kd5 2 Kg2⊙) **2 e4! fe 3 fe Ke5 4 f3 Kf4**

16-16

W?

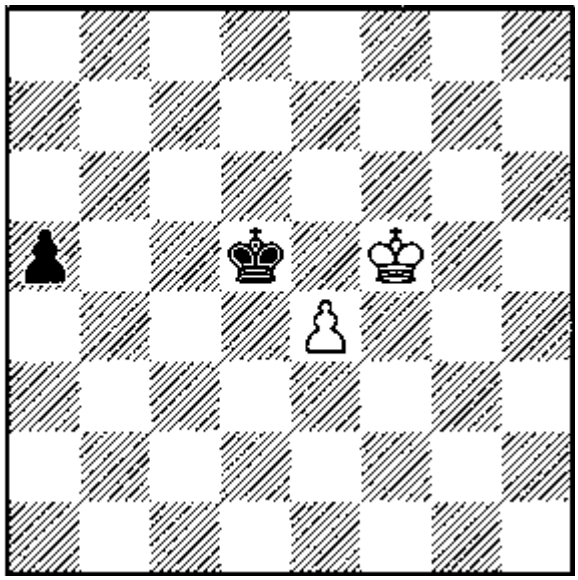


5 Kg1!! g4 6 e5! K×e5 7 fg Kf4 8 Kf2+–.

1/31. J. Moravec, 1952

1 Kf7 Kd6 2 Kf6 Kd5! 3 Kf5 a5 4 e4+

16-17



B

4…Kc6!

Black applies the Grigoriev zigzag.

5 e5!

Of course, not 5 Ke5? (△ 6 Kd4) 5…Kc5! 6 Kf6 a4 7 e5 a3 and Black promotes with check. 5 Kg6? is also inaccurate in view of 5…a4 6 e5 Kd5! 7 Kf5 a3 8 e6 Kd6! 9 Kf6 a2–+.

5…a4 (5…Kd7 6 Ke4=) **6 e6 a3 7 Kg6!**

A similar zigzag saves White.

7…a2 8 e7 Kd7 9 Kf7=.

1/32. I. Gabdrakipov, 1985

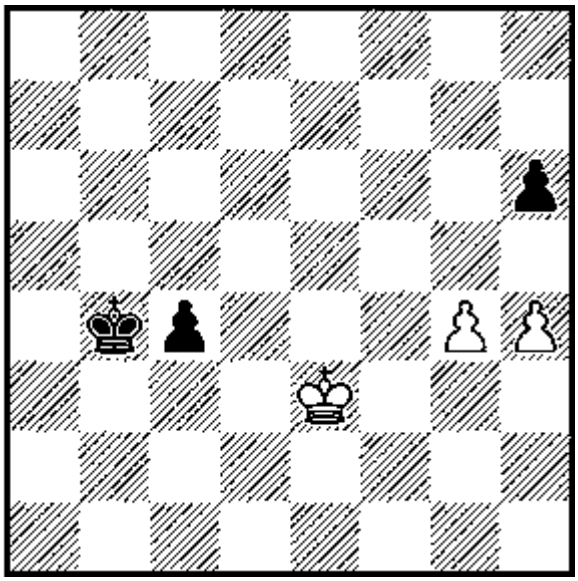
In this study we can see both kinds of zigzags again.

1 Kd3 (1 g4? c5=) **1…Kb3 2 Kd4! Kb4**

2…h5 does not help: 3 g4! hg 4 h5 c5+ 5 Ke3!.

3 g4 (rather than 3 Ke3? Kc5!=) **3…c5+ 4 Ke3! c4**

16-18



W?

5 g5!

After 5 Kd2? c3+ 6 Kc2 Kc4, White has no win: 7 g5 hg 8 h5 (8 hg Kd5=) 8…g4= or 7 h5 Kd4 8 g5 Ke5 9 g6 Kf6=. One should know this drawing position with a pawn less; a reminder will be given in the section devoted to the protected passed pawn.

5…hg 6 h5!

After 6 hg?, Black holds by means of a zigzag: 6…c3 7 g6 Ka3! 8 Kd3 Kb2 9 g7 c2=.

6…c3 7 h6 Kb3 8 h7 c2 9 Kd2! Kb2 10 h8Q+.

1/33. V. Kondratiev, 1985

1 Ka6 Ke2 2 Ka5!

The squares b5 and d3 are mined. 2 Kb5? loses to 2…Kd3⊙ 3 Kb4 c6! 4 K×a4 c5.

2…Kd3 3 Kb5⊙ c6+ 4 Kb4⊙

Of course not 4 K×c6? Kc4!–+. Now Black has no waiting move …c7-c6, and his king is forced to leave the comfortable d3-square. Then White finally takes the a4-pawn and holds by means of a pendulum.

4…Kd4 5 K×a4 c5 6 Kb3 Kd3 7 Kb2! Kd2 8 Kb3=.

1/34. N. Grigoriev, 1931

The attack against the b7-pawn comes too late: 1 Kg5? Kc2 2 Kf6 Kd3 3 Ke5 Kc4 4 Kd6 Kb5 5 Kc7 Ka6⊙. The only hope is to meet …K×b6 with Kb4. The trail should be blazed with awareness of the fact that the black king will try to out-shoulder its colleague.

1 Kg3! Kc2 2 Kf2! Kd3 3 Ke1! Kc4 4 Kd2 Kb5 5 Kc3 K×b6 6 Kb4=.

1/35. N. Grigoriev, 1925

1 Kf6? Kg4 2 K×f7 Kf5! is hopeless. On 1 Kd5? f5 2 Kc6 f4 we get a lost “knight pawn vs. queen” endgame. White’s only hope is to keep the black king locked on the h-file until Black advances his f-pawn close enough to the white king.

1 Kf5! Kh4 2 Kf4 Kh3 3 Kf3 Kh2 4 Kf2 f6 (forced) **5 Kf3 Kg1 6 Ke4 Kf2**

The king has blocked the way of his own pawn, so White’s attack against the b6-pawn arrives in time. But 6…Kg2? would have been even worse: the white king eliminates the f-pawn and has enough time for a return to the queenside: 7 Kf5 Kf3 8 K×f6 Ke4 9 Ke6+–.

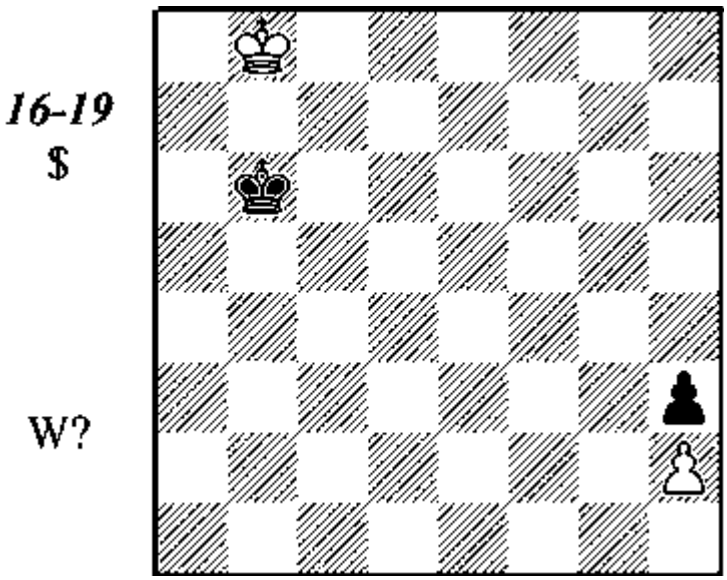
7 Kd5! (7 Kf5? Ke3–+) **7…f5 8 Kc6 f4 9 K×b6**=.

1/36. A. Gerbstman, 1961

1 g7! (1 b7? Rc2+!) **1…Rc2+**

Or 1…Rg2 2 b7 with the same result.

2 Kb8! Rg2 3 b7 R×g7 4 Ka8! Rg8+! (4…R×b7 stalemate) **5 b8Q R×b8+ 6 K×b8 Kb6**



7 Kc8?? would have been a grave error now: 7…Kc6! (shouldering!) 8 Kd8(b8) Kd5 and the white king fails to reach f2.

7 Ka8! Kc6 8 Ka7! Kd5 9 Kb6 Ke4 10 Kc5 Kf3 11 Kd4 Kg2 12 Ke3 K×h2 13 Kf2=.

1/37. H. Adamson, 1915

The straightforward 1 Kd7? fails: 1…Kb6 2 Ke6 Kc5 3 Kf5 Kd4 4 Kg6 Ke3 5 K×h6 Kf4=. White must keep the black king locked on the edge, choose a proper moment for luring the pawns closer, and only then go to the kingside. Very subtle play is required for accomplishing this plan.

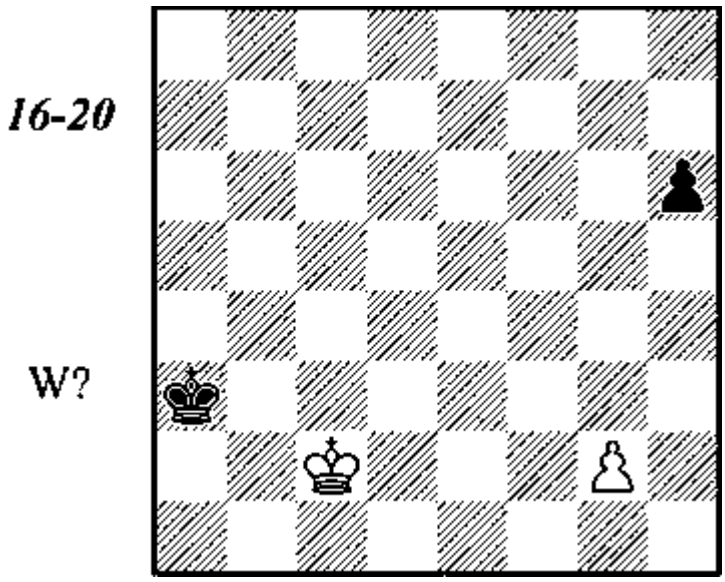
1 Kc7! Ka6 2 Kc6 Ka5 (2…Ka7? 3 g4! Kb8 4 Kd7! Kb7 5 Ke6+–) **3 Kc5 Ka4 4 Kc4 Ka3 5**

Kc3 Ka2 6 Kc2!

It is still early for a pawn advance: 6 g4? Kb1=or 6 g3? Kb1 7 Kd2 Kb2 8 g4 Kb1! (rather than 8…Kb3? 9 Kd3!+–) 9 Kd3 Kc1!=.

Now, if 6…Ka1, then 7 g4 Ka2 8 Kd3 wins. 6…h5 is also bad: 7 Kd3 Kb3 8 Ke4 Kc4 9 Kf5.

6…Ka3



7 g3!!

Rather than a hasty 7 g4? in view of 7…Kb4 8 Kd3 Kc5 9 Ke4 Kd6 10 Kf5 h5! 11 gh Ke7=.

7…Ka4!?

This continuation is perhaps more clever than the author's solution, 7…Kb4 (7…Ka2 8 g4+–; 7…h5 8 Kd3 Kb4 9 Ke4 Kc5 10 Kf5) 8 Kd3 Kc5 9 Ke4⊙ Kd6 10 Kf5 Kd5 (10…Ke7 11 Kg6) 11 g4+–.

8 Kc3!

After 8 Kd3? Kb4 9 Ke4 Kc5, a position from the previous variation arises. However strange it may seem, this is a reciprocal zugzwang and, with White on move, the outcome is only a draw: 10 g4 Kd6 11 Kf5 h5!= or 10 Kf5 Kd4=.

8…Kb5 9 Kd4 Kc6 10 Ke5!

(10 Ke4? Kc5!⊙=).

10…Kc5 (10…Kd7 11 Kf6+–) **11 g4**+–.

1/38. L. Prokeš, 1944 (after H. Mattison, 1929)

1 Kf6!

Both 1 Kf7? Kh7 2 g4 g5⊙ 3 Kf6 h5= and 1 g4? g5 2 Kf6 h5= are wrong.

1…Kh7 2 g4 g5 (2…h5 3 g5+–) **3 Kf7⊙ h5 4 h4! Kh6** (4…gh 5 g5; 4…hg 5 hg) **5 Kf6**+–.

1/39. J. Behting, 1905

1 Ke1!! Kg2 (1…Kh2 2 Kf2! Kh3 3 Kf3⊙ Kh2 4 g4) **2 g4 fg 3 f5 g3 4 f6!** (4 h6? gh 5 f6 Kh2=) **4…gf 5 h6 f5 6 h7 f4 7 h8Q f3 8 Qa8**+–

If the white king had gone to e2 on the first move, the move 7…f3 in the main line would have been check, with a draw after 8 Ke3 f2. Another alternative, 1 Kf2?, also leads to a draw: 1…Kh2 2 Kf3 Kh3⊙=.

1/40. T. Kok, 1939

The standard pawn breakthrough does not work immediately: 1 c5?! dc 2 b5? (2 bc bc 3 dc Kf3=) 2…cd+. White must prepare it, but how? Of the many king retreats, only one leads to success.

1 Kd2!! Kf3 (1…b5 2 d5! cd 3 cb; 1…d5 2 b5! cb 3 cd; 1…c5 2 dc dc 3 bc bc 4 Ke3) **2 c5! bc** (2…dc 3 b5! cb 4 d5) **3 d5! cd 4 b5**+–

All other first moves draw or even lose.

1 b5? cb (1…c5!–+ is even simpler) 2 Kb4 (2 cb d5–+) 2…bc 3 K×c4 Kf3 4 Kd5 b5–+;

1 Kb2?! Kf2 2 c5 bc 3 d5? cd 4 b5 d4 5 b6 d3–+;

1 Kc2?! Kf3 (1…c5=) 2 c5 bc! 3 d5? cd 4 b5 Ke2 5 b6 d4 6 b7 d3+ and 7…d2–+;

1 Kd3?! Kf3 2 c5 bc! 3 d5 cd 4 b5 c4+ 5 Kd4 c3! 6 K×c3 Ke3=;

1 d5?! c5! (1…cd? 2 Kd4! dc 3 K×c4 Kf3 4 Kd5+–) 2 bc bc 3 Kb3 Kf3 4 Ka4 Ke4 5 Kb5 Kd4 6 Kc6 K×c4 7 K×d6 Kb4 8 Ke7 c4=.

1/41. Guliev-Tukmakov, Nikolaev zt 1993

1 B×e5!

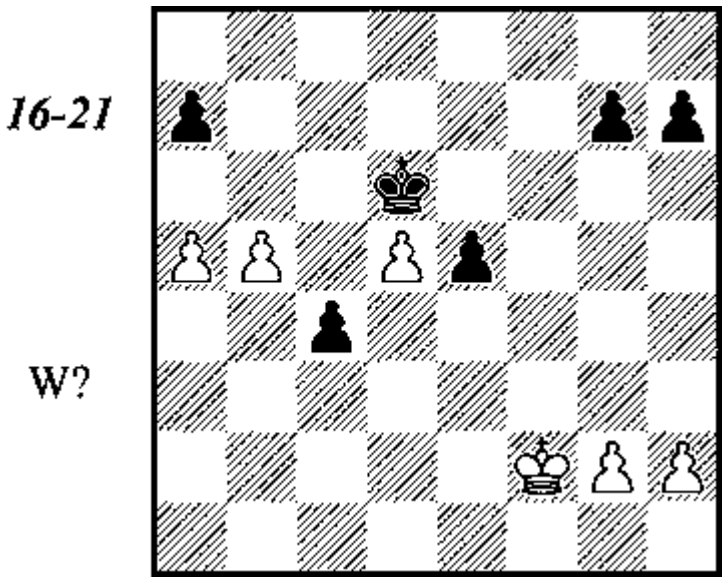
1 a4? Nc4∓ △ 2…Nb6.

1…de 2 a4!

This is how White should have played. However, the remainder of the game was 2 Ke3?? Kd6 3 Ke4 c4 4 a4 c3 5 Kd3 K×d5, and White resigned. One more tragicomedy!

2…Kd6 3 a5 c4

If 3…K×d5, then 4 a6! △ 5 b6+– – we have seen a similar conclusion in the game Capablanca-Ed. Lasker. But Black cannot avoid it.



4 a6!

4 b6? leads only to a draw: 4…a6! 5 Ke3 Kd7 6 Ke4 Kd6 7 b7 Kc7 8 K×e5 c3 9 d6+ K×b7 10 Ke6 c2 11 d7 c1Q 12 d8Q.

4…Kc5 5 d6! K×d6 6 b6+–.

1/42. K. Rothländer, 1893

Black, if on move, holds by means of 1…f5!.

1 f5+! K×f5 (1…Kg5 2 f6!+–) **2 h4 Kf6** (2…Ke5 3 Kg4 f6 4 h5 Ke6 5 Kf4+–) **3 Kf4 Kg6 4 Kg4 Kh6 5 h5 f6**

5…Kh7 6 Kg5(f5) is the same.

6 Kf5 K×h5 7 K×f6 Kg4 8 Ke5 Kf3 9 K×d5! Ke3 10 Kc4⊙+–.

1/43. W. Bähr, 1935

White has seized the opposition and his king will inevitably break through to one of the wings.

1…Ke7! 2 Ke3! Kf7!

Black gives away the a-pawn. If he plays 2…Kd7? and gives away the h-pawn, White wins with 3 Kf4 Kd6 4 Kg5 Ke5 5 K×h5 Kf5 6 Kh6 Kf6 7 h5 Kf7 8 Kg5 Kg7 9 Kf5 because his a-pawn is above the middle line.

3 Kd4 Kf6! 4 Kc5 Ke5 5 Kb6 Kd6 6 K×a6 Kc6 (6…Kc7 is playable, too) **7 Ka7 Kc7 8 a6 Kc8 9 Kb6 Kb8**=

A "normal position" has arisen.

1/44. W. Bähr, 1935

After **1 Kc2! Kb4 2 Kd3 K×a4 3 Kc4**⊙ (if White were on move here he would have been lost) **3…a6 4 Kc5!** (4 Kc3? Kb5+–) **4…Ka5 5 Kc4 Kb6 6 Kb4**=, we come to a familiar drawing position.

1 Ka3? (hoping for 1…a5? 2 Kb2 Kb4 3 Kc2 K×a4 4 Kc3 Kb5 5 Kb3=) meets the refutation 1…Kc3! 2 a5 Kc4 3 Ka4 Kc5! (3…a6? 4 Ka3 Kb5 5 Kb3 K×a5 6 Kc4 Kb6 7 Kb4=) 4 a6 Kb6 5 Kb4 K×a6 6 Kc5 Kb7 (6…Ka5⊙ is even stronger) 7 Kb5 Kc7. The a7-pawn is standing above the key diagonal f1-a6, so Black disposes of a decisive tempo.

1/45. M. Zinar, 1982

1 e5? is wrong; after 1…Kd5 2 Kf4 Ke6 3 Ke4 Ke7=, the count of the reserve tempi is 1:1, therefore the position is drawn. When the pawn is on e4, however, White has two spare tempi instead of one (his pawn is two squares from e6) – a favorable situation for him.

1 Kf3? does not work either: after 1…Kb3 2 e5 K×a3, a drawn endgame with queen versus rook pawn arises. However, this endgame is winning when the king is standing on the e-file. From all this, the winning plan can be constructed: White must pass the move to the opponent by means of triangulation.

1 Ke2! Kd4 2 Kf3 Kc4 (2…Ke5 3 Ke3 Ke6 4 Kd4 Kd6 5 Kc4+–) **3 Ke3**⊙ **Kb3 4 e5 K×a3 5 e6 Kb2 6 e7 a3 7 e8Q a2 8 Kd2 a1Q 9 Qb5+ Ka3 10 Qa5+ Kb2 11 Qb4+ Ka2 12 Kc2**+–.

1/46. N. Grigoriev, 1936

Black has the distant opposition and is planning to transform it into the close opposition by means of an outflanking at the appropriate moment. White's only hope is the drawn Dedrle position (diagram 1-141), but how it can be achieved?

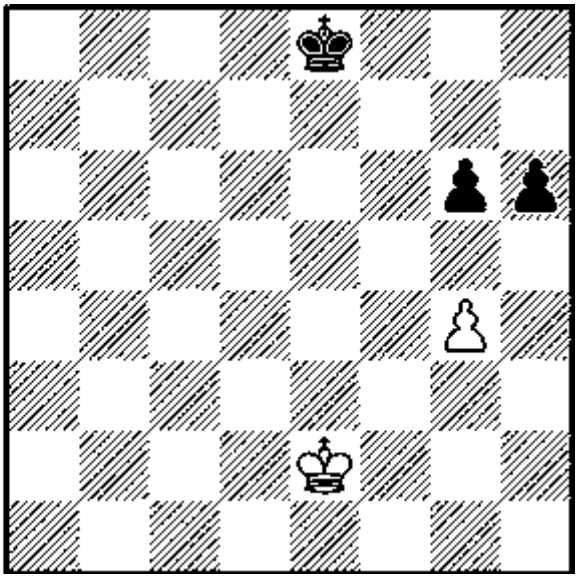
1 Kc2! Kc8! (1…Kc7? 2 Kc3=) **2 Kd2** (rather than 2 g5? hgo) **2…Kd8 3 Ke2!**

It is still too early to push the king ahead: 3 Ke3? Ke7 4 Kf3 (4 g5 hg 5 Kf3 Ke6–+) 4…Kd6! 5 g5 h5–+, and as we know, the white king must go to d4 in this position.

3…Ke8

16-22

W?



Black is ready to outflank: 4 Kd2? Kf7! or 4 Kf2? Kd7!, while 5 g5 is still impossible in view of 5…hg.

4 Kf3! Kd7

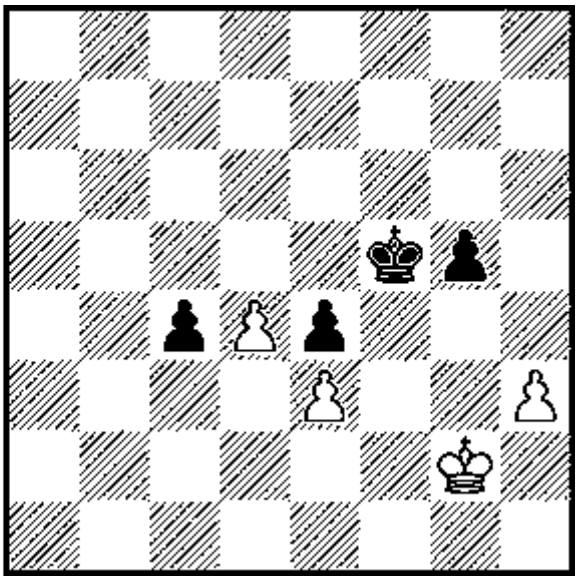
4…Kf7 5 Kf4 Kf6 6 g5+! hg+ 7 Kg4=; 4…Ke7 5 Ke3!=

5 g5!! h5 6 Ke3! Kc7 (6…Kd6 7 Kd4; 6…Kc6 7 Ke4 Kc5 8 Ke5) **7 Kd3! Kb7 8 Ke3! Ka6 9 Ke4!**, etc.

1/47. V. Chekhover, 1951

The king must enter the square of the c-pawn (1 fg?? c3–+). The immediate 1 Kf2? is not correct in view of 1…gf 2 ef c3 3 Ke3 Kd5 4 f5 Kc4. The d4-pawn must stay a protected passed pawn.

1 f5+! K×f5



Black's counterplay on the queenside fails now, e.g., 2 Kf2 Ke6? 3 Ke2 c3 4 Kd1 Kd5 5 Kc1! (the squares c2-c4 are mined) 5…Kc4 6 Kc2 Kb4 7 d5 Kc5 8 K×c3 K×d5 9 Kb4, and the white king controls key squares. But defensive resources are not exhausted: the black king can enter the fight via the kingside as well after …g5-g4!.

The natural continuation 2 Kf2? gives only a draw after 2…g4! 3 hg+ K×g4 4 Ke2 (4 Ke1 Kf3 5 Kd2 c3+ or 5 d5 K×e3 6 d6 c3 7 Kd1 Kf2 8 d7 e3=) 4…c3⊙ 5 Kd1 (5 d5 Kf5=) 5…Kf3 6 d5 K×e3 7 d6 Kf2=.

Notice that Black would have been lost if he had been on move in the position with the king on e2 and the pawn on c3. From this fact, we define the corresponding squares and choose the most precise route for the king.

2 Kf1!! c3 (2…g4 3 hg+ K×g4 4 Kf2! c3 5 Ke2⊙) **3 Ke1! g4 4 hg+ K×g4 5 Ke2!⊙ c2** (5…Kg3 6 d5; 5…Kf5 6 Kd1) **6 Kd2 Kf3 7 d5 c1Q+ 8 K×c1 K×e3 9 d6 Kf2 10 d7 e3 11 d8Q**+–.

1/48. Hernandez-Ferragut, Cuba 1998

Question number one: where do we place the pawns? If 1 g7? Kf7 2 Ke3 Kg8 3 Kf4, with the idea 3…Kh7? 4 Kf5 e3 5 Ke6+–, Black responds with 3…Kf7!, and the king's march does not win: 4 Kg5 e3 5 Kh6 e2 6 Kh7 e1Q 7 g8Q+ K×f6 8 Qg6+ Ke7=.

If the pawn is on f7 and the black king on f8, K×d5! wins. But the immediate 1 f7+? does not lead to this position because Black has 1…Kg7! 2 Ke3 Kf8 3 Kf4 Kg7=.

1 Ke3! Kf8 2 f7! Kg7 3 Kd4⊙ Kf8 4 K×d5! (if 4 Ke5, then 4…Ke7) **4…e3 5 Ke6 e2** (5…Kg7 6 Ke7) **6 Kf6 e1Q 7 g7#**.

1/49. N. Kopaev, 1947

1 Kb6!

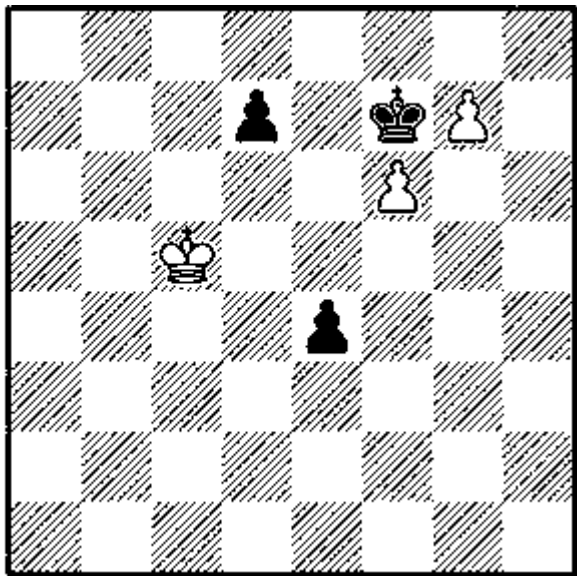
Both 1 Rh5? Kd8 and 1 Rg5? Kc7! yield nothing.

1…Kd8 (1…R×h6? 2 Rg5+–) **2 Rg5 Ke8 3 Rg8+ Kf7 4 Rg7+ R×g7 5 hg!**

We have reached a pawn endgame with White's far-advanced passed pawns by force.

5…e5 6 Kc5 e4

16-24



W?

7 Kc4!

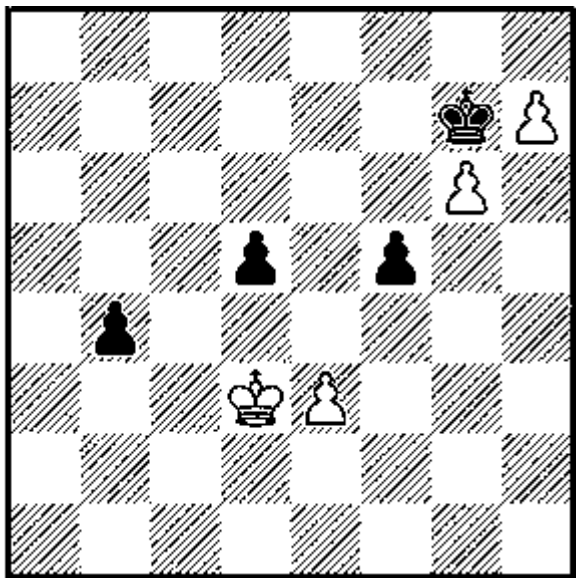
An important subtlety, the upcoming king assault works only when the black king is standing on g8. At this moment White must plan how to reach the inevitable zugzwang position with Black on move. 7 Kd4? d5 8 Ke3 Kg8 9 Kf4 Kf7⊙ leads only to a draw: we have already seen this position in the previous exercise, in the 1 g7? line.

7…d6!? 8 Kc3! (8 Kd4? d5=) **8…Kg8 9 Kd4 d5 10 Ke3 Kf7 11 Kf4⊙ Kg8 12 Kg5!** (12 Kf5?! Kf7!) **12…Kh7** (12…e3 13 Kg6 e2 14 f7#; 12…Kf7 13 Kh6 e3 14 Kh7+–) **13 Kf5! e3 14 Ke6 e2** (14…Kg8 15 f7+ K×g7 16 Ke7) **15 Kf7 e1Q 16 g8Q+ Kh6 17 Qg6#**.

1/50. N. Grigoriev, 1932

White's king is in the square of the b-pawn, but if it approaches the pawn, Black will create another passed pawn on the f-file at cost of his d5-pawn. For example, 1 Kg3 b5 2 Kf3 b4 3 Ke2 f5 4 Kd3

16-25



B?

4…b3! 5 Kc3 d4+! 6 ed f4 7 d5 f3 8 d6 f2 9 d7 f1Q 10 d8Q Qc1+ 11 Kb4 Qe1+! 12 Ka4 Qa1+! 13 K×b3 Qb1+ 14 Kc3 Qc1+ 15 Kb4 Qb1+! 16 Ka5 (16 Kc5 Qc2+) 16…Qf5+ with a draw.

So the strongest plan is to rush the king over to its own passed pawns.

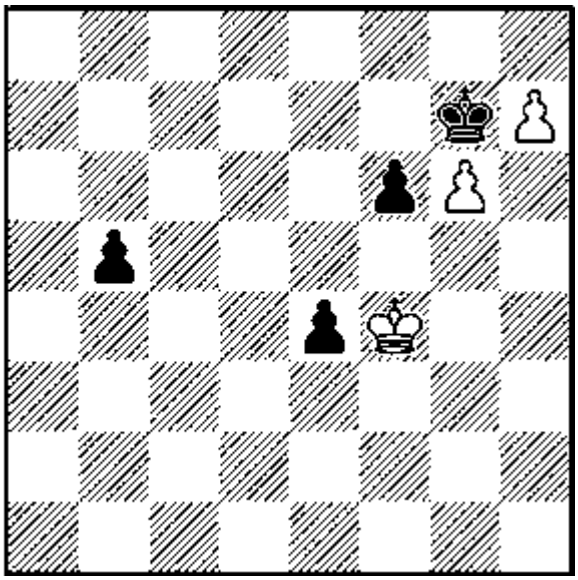
1 e4!!

The straightforward 1 Kg3? b5 2 Kf4 (there is already no time for 2 e4 in view of 2…b4!) 2…b4 3 Kf5 leads only to a draw: 3…b3 4 Ke6 b2 5 h8Q+ K×h8 6 Kf7 b1Q 7 g7+ Kh7 8 g8Q+ Kh6 and the black queen defends the g6-square where White would have liked to give mate. Therefore the b1-h7 diagonal must be closed.

1…de

1…d4 is even worse in view of 2 Kg3 b5 3 Kf4 b4 (3…d3 4 Ke3) 4 Kf5 with mate.

2 Kg3 b5 3 Kf4



3…e3

We already know that Black will be mated from g6 after 3…b4 4 Kf5!, etc. For this reason, he tries to distract the white king from the kingside.

4 K×e3 b4

After 4…f5 5 Kf4! (5 Kd4? f4) 5…b4 6 Ke5! b3 7 Ke6 b2 8 h8Q+ K×h8 9 Kf7, the black pawn on f5 is as treacherous as the e4-pawn: it cuts its own queen off from the g6-square.

5 Kd4! f5

Unfortunately, this is forced: after 5…b3 6 Kc3 f5 7 K×b3, the king remains in the square of the f-pawn.

6 Ke5! b3 (6…f4 7 Ke6!) **7 Ke6 b2 8 h8Q+ K×h8 9 Kf7 b1Q 10 g7+ Kh7 11 g8Q+ Kh6 12 Qg6#**.

1/51. A. Troitsky, 1900*

After 1…Kg4?, the main line of the study arises. White builds a stalemate shelter on the queenside: 2 a5! K×h5 (2…Kf4 3 Kf2=) 3 Kd2 Kg4 4 Kc2 h5 (or 4…Kf3 5 Kb2 Ke3 6 Ka3 Kd3 7 Ka4 K×c3 8 a3=) 5 Kb2 h4 6 Ka3 h3 7 Ka4 h2 8 a3 h1Q=.

But 1…a5?? is even worse because White even manages to win after 2 Ke3 Kg4 3 Ke4 K×h5 4 Kf5⊙ Kh4 5 Ke6.

However, Rubenis has refuted the study, yet Black nevertheless can win.

1…Kf4!! (△ 2…a5) **2 a5 Ke4! 3 Kd2**

3 Kf2 Kd3 is hopeless. After 3 a3 Kf4, Black's king can simply steal the kingside pawns because the road to the refuge does not exist anymore.

3…Kf3 4 Kc2 Ke3 5 Kb2 Kd3 6 Ka3 K×c3 7 Ka4 Kd2 8 a3 c3–+ – there is no stalemate!

1/52. N. Grigoriev, 1934

1 b4!

Of course, not 1 Kg5? c5 (or 1…Kd4) with a draw.

1…Kd4

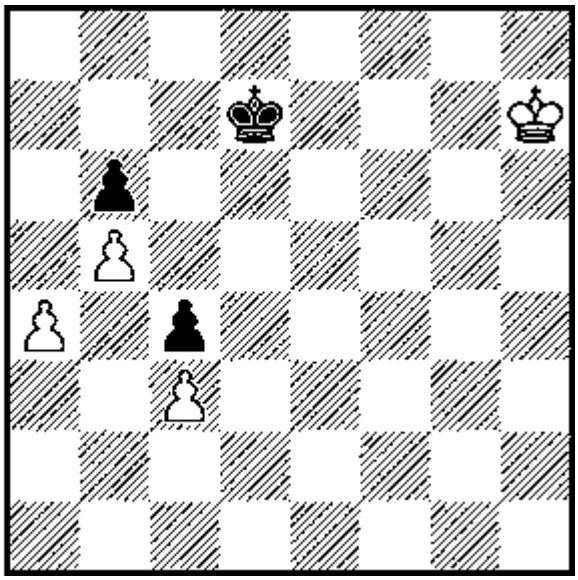
At first glance everything is quite simple. White's pawns protect themselves after c2-c3; he must just go to the kingside for the h7-pawn and come back.

Actually, however, the problem is much more complicated than that. Black has an unexpected idea: to play …c7-c5 and to answer b4-b5 with …c5-c4. Then he gets a stalemate shelter on c5 for his king. We continue the analysis and come to see that, with this pawn configuration, the outcome depends on the flank opposition after capturing the h-pawn.

The superficial move 2 c3+? enables Black to win the fight for the opposition and to achieve a

draw. 2…Kd5! 3 Kg5 c5 4 b5 c4 5 Kh6 Kd6 6 K×h7 Kd7

16-27



W

7 Kh6 (7 Kg6 Ke6 8 Kg5 Ke5 9 Kg4 Ke6) 7…Kd6 8 Kh5 Kd5 9 Kh4 Kd6! 10 Kg4 Ke6 11 Kf4 Kd6 12 Ke4 (12 Kf5 Kd5 13 Kf6 Kd6) 12…Kc5! (Black's defensive plan!) 13 Ke3 (13 Ke5 stalemate) 13…Kd5! 14 Kf3 Ke5 15 Kg4 Ke6!, etc.

2 Ke6!

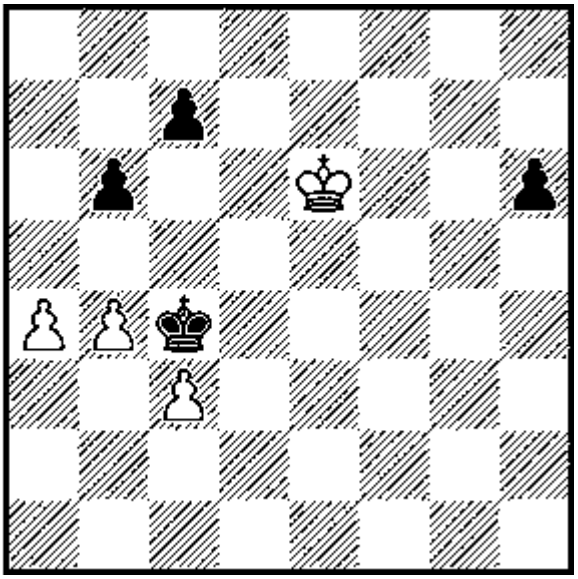
White must take the d5-square away from the black king.

2…h6 3 c3+!

3 Kf5? is premature: 3…c5 4 b5 Kd5! 5 Kg6 c4 6 K×h6 c3= or 6 c3 Ke5 7 K×h6 Kd6! and Black holds the opposition again.

3…Kc4

16-28



W?

4 Ke5!

It is important to entice the pawn to h5. 4 Kf6? c5 5 b5 Kd5 6 Kg6 c4 7 K×h6 Kd6!= is wrong.

4…h5 5 Kf5 c6!? 6 Kg5 Kd5 7 Kh4!

An obligatory loss of a tempo – after 7 K×h5? c5 8 b5 c4, it is again White who is in zugzwang.

7…c5 (there is nothing else) **8 b5 c4 9 K×h5**

White has won the fight for the opposition! The rest is standard (approaching with the help of outflanking).

9…Kd6 10 Kh6! (10 Kg4? Ke6=) **10…Kd5** (10…Kd7 11 Kh7 or 11 Kg5 Ke6 12 Kg6) **11 Kg7! Ke6 12 Kg6**+–.

1/53. Yermolinsky-I. Ivanov, USA ch, Parsippany 1996

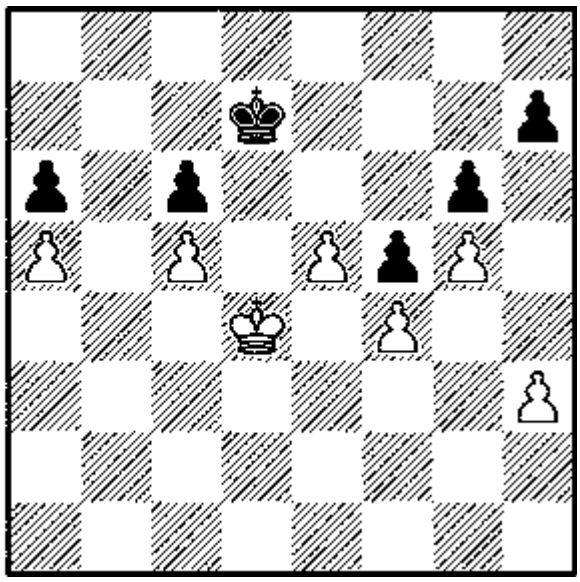
1 g5!

With this move, White not only gets a spare tempo (h3-h4) but also deprives the black king of the important f6-square.

The actual game continuation was 1 gf? gf 2 Ke2 Ke7 3 Kd3 h5 4 K×d4 h4 5 Kd3 Draw.

1…Kf7 2 Ke2 Ke7 (2…Ke6 3 Kd3 Kd5 4 e6 K×e6 5 K×d4⊙) **3 Kd3 Ke6 4 K×d4 Kd7**

16-29



W

Now White should sacrifice the e-pawn and occupy the corresponding d4-square when Black captures it; this will put Black in zugzwang.

5 Kc3 Ke6 6 Kc4⊙ Kd7 7 e6+! Ke7 8 Kd3⊙ K×e6 9 Kd4⊙ Kf7 10 Ke5 Ke7 11 h4⊙+–

If Black tries 1…Kg7 (planning 2…h5), the simplest is 2 e6! Kf8 3 Ke2 Ke8 4 Kd3 Ke7 5 Kc4! ⊙ K×e6 6 K×d4⊙, transposing to the main line.

1/54. E. Post, 1941

A breakthrough is threatened (1 f4? b5! 2 cb c4), therefore the white king must enter the square of the c-pawn. The move 1 Kg5 seems illogical because it creates no threat (2 K×g6 or 2 f4 will be still met with 2…b5). 1 Kg4 (△ 2 f4) speaks for itself, the breakthrough fails thereafter and the black king must run to the kingside. But let us look what can happen:

1 Kg4 Kb8! 2 f4 Kc7 3 f5 gf+ 4 ef Kd7 5 f6! Ke6 6 Kg5 Kf7 7 Kf5. Black is in zugzwang, but his spare tempo 7…b6! saves him: the white king must go to an unfavorable square (g5).

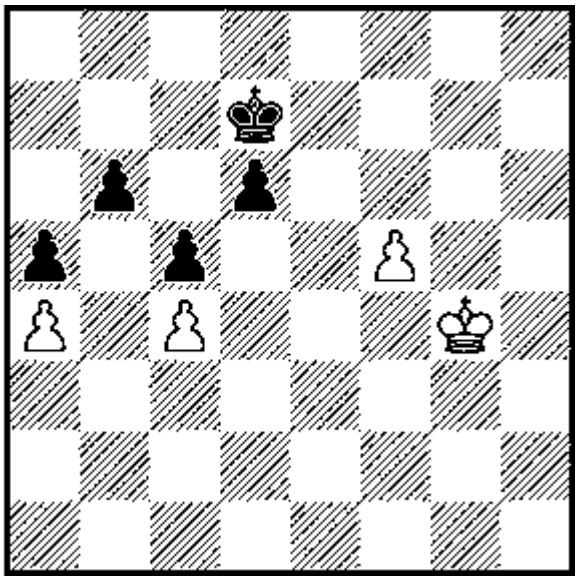
8 Kg5 d5 9 cd c4 10 d6 c3 11 d7 c2 12 d8Q c1Q+ and the pawn promotes with check.

Looking for an improvement for White, we come back to 1 Kg5. Yes, it creates no threat but still, how should Black react? 1…Kb6 is bad in view of 2 K×g6! (the black king is an obstacle for …b7-b5); the same reply follows after 1…Ka6 (if 2…b5 White takes the pawn with check). If 1…Kb8, then 2 f4! b5 3 f5 gf 4 ef and the f-pawn promotes first with check. What remains is the waiting move 1…b6, but then Black lacks the highly important spare tempo.

1 Kg5!! b6□ 2 Kg4! Kb7 3 f4 Kc7 4 f5 gf+ 5 ef (White has created a distant passed pawn) **5…Kd7**

16-30

W?



6 f6!

A mistake would be 6 Kg5? d5 7 cd c4 8 Kf4? (8 f6=) 8…b5! 9 ab a4 10 b6 c3! 11 Ke3 a3! 12 b7 Kc7 13 f6 c2!–+. This technique of decoying the king into a check is already known to us from Khachaturov's study (exercise 1/24).

6…Ke6 7 Kg5 Kf7 8 Kf5⊙ d5 9 cd c4 10 d6 c3 11 d7 c2 12 d8Q c1Q 13 Qe7+ with mate.

1/55. Randviir-Keres, Pärnu 1947

1…Kb5!

In case of 1…Kb6? 2 Kc4 a5 3 a4⊙, Black is forced to waste his spare tempo before the critical moment arrives: 3…h6. Thereafter, both 4 d6 Kc6 5 d7 K×d7 6 K×c5 and the simpler continuation 4 Kd3 Kc7 5 Kc3! lead to a draw ("untouchable pawns").

2 a4+ (2 Kc3 c4 3 Kd4 c3! 4 K×c3 Kc5–+) **2…Kb6 3 Kc4 a5!** (3…h6? 4 a5+) **4 d6**

4 Kd3 loses immediately: 4…Kc7 5 Kc3 Kd6 6 Kc4 h6⊙.

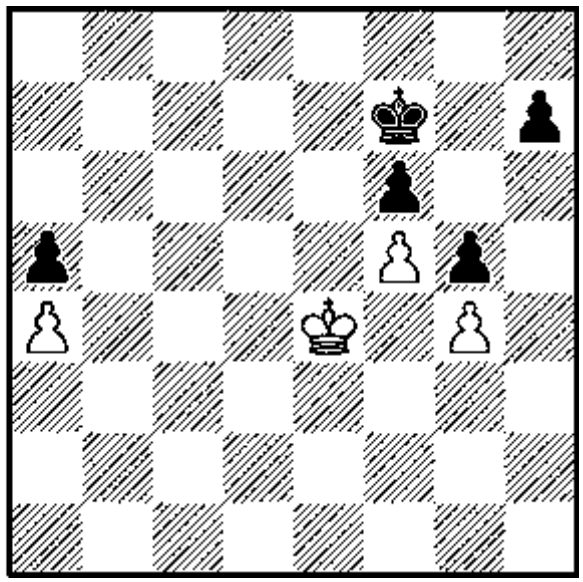
4…Kc6 5 d7 K×d7 6 K×c5 Ke7

The king goes to the kingside to create the threat …h7-h5 (so that White has no time to attack the a5-pawn). 6…Ke8 is also playable; White responds with 7 Kd4! (rather than 7 Kd5? Ke7!⊙).

7 Kd5 Kf7 8 Ke4 (8 Kd6 h5)

16-31

B?



8…h5? is premature here: 9 gh Kg7 10 Kf3 Kh7 11 Kg3= ("untouchable pawns"). But how should White proceed if he is on move? If 9 Ke3(f3), then 9…Ke7 10 Ke4 Kd6 11 Kd4 h6⊙ (this is what the spare tempo is needed for!). If 9 Kd4(d5), then 9…h5 10 gh Kg7–+ (or 9…Kg7 △ 10…h5–+).

8…Kf8!⊙

Thus, the move is passed to the opponent. The f8-square is equivalent to f7 in all aspects (two steps to both d6 and h6). 8…Kg7 is less precise: 9 Kf3! Kg8 10 Ke3! Kf7 11 Ke4!.

9 Ke3 Ke7! 10 Ke4 Kd6 11 Kd4 h6⊙ 12 Ke4 (11 Kc4 Ke5 12 Kb5 h5 13 gh K×f5 14 K×a5 g4) **12…Kc5 13 Ke3 Kd5**

Almost everything wins now. For example, 13…Kb4 14 Kd4 K×a4 is good enough.

14 Kd3 Ke5 15 Ke3 h5 16 gh K×f5 17 Kf3 Ke6

17…g4+ 18 Kg3 Kg5 is also strong: 19 h6 K×h6 20 K×g4 Kg6 (the f-pawn is standing above the c1-h6 diagonal).

18 Kg4 Kf7 19 Kf5 Kg7 White resigned.

Chapter Two

2/1. A. Troitsky, 1906

1 Kf3!

Rather than 1 Kf2? Kh1 2 Ng3+ Kh2 3 Ne4 Kh1⊙, and White fails to mate. As we already know, a knight cannot "lose" a tempo.

1…Kh1 2 Kf2 Kh2 3 Nc3

The goal is the f1-square. It can also be reached via Nd4-f5-e3-f1.

3…Kh1 4 Ne4 Kh2 5 Nd2 Kh1 6 Nf1⊙ h2 7 Ng3#.

2/2. L. Kubbel, 1934

White can exchange rooks by force if he attacks the knight. But first, in order to make this endgame drawn, the h-pawn should be enticed to h3.

1 Rb7! h6

1…Rh3? 2 Rb1, and there is no 2…Nc2?? in view of 3 Rb3+.

2 Rb6 h5 3 Rb5 h4 4 Rb4!

Attacking the h-pawn with the king is not justified: 4 Kg2? Rf4 5 Kh3 Nc2 6 Rh5 Ne3 7 R×h4 Rf3#.

4…h3 (4…Nc2 5 R×h4 Ne3 6 h3=) **5 Rb1 Nc2 6 Rb3+ Ke2 7 R×f3 K×f3 8 Kh1(f1)**=.

2/3. P. Faragó, 1943

1 h7? Rg5 2 h6 Nc6 3 a7 Ne5(d8) loses immediately, hence White's initial move is forced.

1 Kg7 Rg5+ 2 Kf6!

2 Kf7? is incorrect: 2…Rf5+ 3 Kg7 Ke7 4 h7 Rf7+ 5 Kg6 Rf8 6 Kg7 Rh8! 7 h6 Nc6 8 a7 Ne5 9 a8Q R×a8 10 h8Q R×h8 11 K×h8 Kf7 12 Kh7 Nd7 13 Kh8 Nf8 14 h7 Ng6#. Checkmating the white king in the corner with the knight is Black's goal in all cases, while White has to find a way to avoid this sorrowful outcome.

2…Rg8

2…R×h5 3 Kg7 Ke7 4 h7 leads to nothing, for example: 4…Rh3!? 5 h8Q Rg3+ 6 Kh6!= (rather than 6 Kh7? Kf7–+).

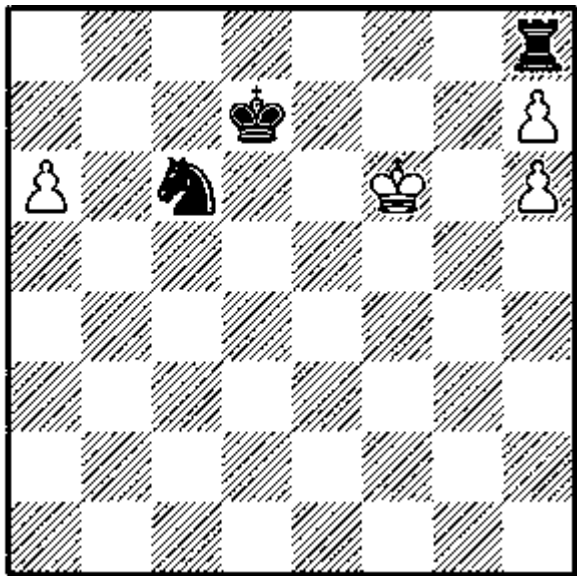
3 h7!

The king prefers to stay on f6 where it deprives the black knight of the important e5-square. After 3 Kf7?, White can no longer hold the game: 3…Re8! (the rook will be sacrificed in the corner only when the white pawn comes to h7) 4 h7 Rh8 5 h6 Nc6 6 a7 Ne5+! 7 Kf6 Kd6! 8 Kg7 Ke7, and we have already seen what follows. By the way, another winning method exists: 8…Ke6 9 a8Q R×a8 10 h8Q Ra7+!? 11 Kg8 Ng4 12 Kf8 (12 h7 Nh6+ 13.Kf8 Ra8+ 14 Kg7 Nf5+ and 15…R×h8) 12…Nf6, and White has no satisfactory defense against the threat 13…Rf7#.

3…Rh8 (3…Ra8 4 Kg7=) **4 h6!** (rather than 4 Kg7? Ke7 5 h6 Nc6–+ again) **4…Nc6**

16-32

W?



5 a7!

Before White sends his king to the corner he wants to get rid of the a-pawn (5…N×a7 6 Kg7=). Of course, Black does not take the pawn but his knight cannot go to e5; it must occupy a less favorable square.

5…Ne7 6 Kg7

6 a8Q? is premature: 6…R×a8 7 Kg7 Nf5+.

6…Ke6 7 a8Q! R×a8 8 h8Q R×h8

White's last opportunity for a mistake: 9 K×h8? Kf7 10 Kh7 (we know this position from exercise 2/1) 10…Nc6 11 Kh8 Ne5 12 Kh7 Nd7 13 Kh8 Nf8 14 h7 Ng6#.

9 h7!=.

2/4. Mankus-Fokin, Vilnius 1977

If Black had had time to block the pawn by playing 1…Nd6, he would have stood better.

1 d6! N×d6 2 Bd5±

White's next move is 3 B×b7!, and the bishop cannot be captured because White promotes after 3…N×b7 4 a6. But White still has an obvious advantage even if Black does not take the bishop. In this sort of open position, with a distant passed pawn as well, a bishop is much stronger than a knight.

2…Kf8 3 B×b7! Ke7 4 Bd5 f5 5 h4 h6 6 Kf1 Kd7 7 Ke2 Nb5 8 Kd3 Kd6 9 Bf7 Kc5 (9…g5 10 Kc4 Nc7 11 Bg6) 10 B×g6 Nd6 11 a6 Kb6 12 B×f5! and White won (if 12…N×f5, then 13 Ke4 and 14 K×e5 is decisive).

2/5. N. Grigoriev, 1932

The knight cannot arrive at h2 in time – at most, it can only prevent a promotion by taking the h1-square under control. Then White's only hope is to create a barrier that will make it difficult for the black king to approach.

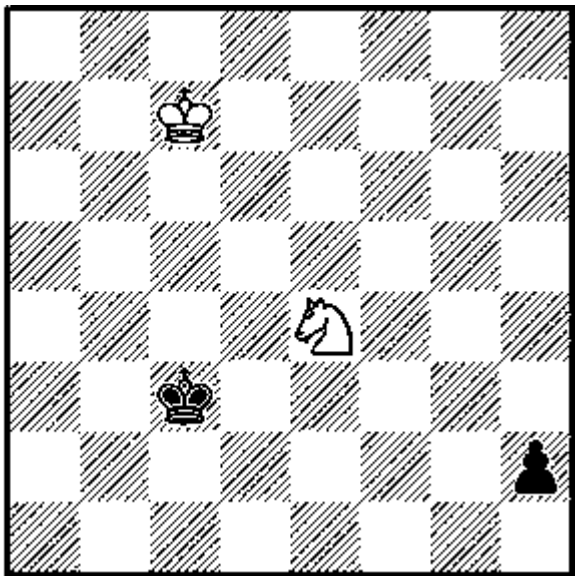
1 Ng6? h3 2 Nf4 h2 3 Ne2+ Kd2! 4 Ng3 Ke1–+ does not work. Let us try another route.

1 Nf7! h3 2 Ng5!

2 Nd6? fails to 2…Kd3 3 Nf5 Ke2! 4 Ng3+ Kf2–+.

2…h2 3 Ne4+

16-33



B

Where should the black king go? After 3…Kd3?! 4 Ng3!, a barrier arises, as we already know. If 3…Kd4, then 4 Ng3? is bad: 4…Ke5! 5 Kc6 Kf4 6 Nh1 Kf3 and the white king fails to get to f2, but White has 4 Nf2! Kc3 (both 4…Ke3 and 4…Ke5 are met with 5 Ng4+) 5 Kd6 Kd2 6 Ke5 Ke2 7 Nh1 Kf3 8 Kd4 Kg2 9 Ke3 K×h1 10 Kf2=.

3…Kc2 4 Ng3!

4 Nf2? Kd2 leads to the line from the previous annotation, but with an extra tempo for Black.

4…Kd1 5 Kd6 Ke1 6 Ke5 Kf2 7 Kf4=.

2/6. D. Gurgenidze, 1970 (after N. Grigoriev, 1934)

White can easily parry the threat to the h7-knight by approaching the b5-pawn with his king, e.g., 1 Kb3(a3) Kf7 2 Kb4 Kg7 3 K×b5 K×h7 4 Kc4=. However, Black has a more dangerous plan, namely 1…Ke6!, and if 2 Kb4, then 2…Kf5 3 K×b5 h5–+. Since the white king fails to enter the square of the h-pawn after 1…Ke6, the task of fighting against it must be taken up by the knight: 2 Nf8+. It is highly important to foresee its entire route, because the correct first move can only be discovered in this way.

1 Ka3!!

Only here, to keep the b3-square free. Both 1 Kb3? Ke6! and 1 Kb2? Kf7! are losing.

1…Ke6! 2 Nf8+! Kf5 3 Nd7 h5 4 Nc5 h4 5 Nb3!!

5 Nd3? h3 6 Nf2 h2 7 Kb4 Kf4–+.

5…h3 6 Nd2 h2 (6…Kf4 7 Nf1=) **7 Nf1 h1Q 8 Ng3+**.

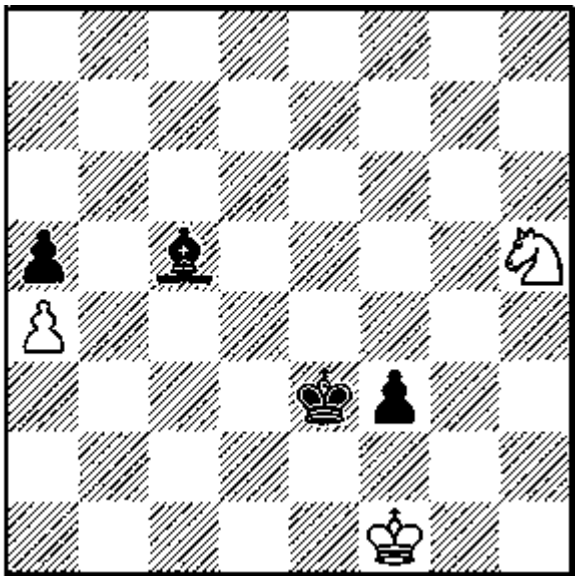
2/7. Stangl-Schneider, Berlin 1992

In the actual game, White played 1 Ng7?. The position after 1…Bf6 2 N×h5 Bd4! (△ 3…Kd3) is definitely lost: White cannot prevent Black's king march to the queenside pawns.

3 c5 B×c5

16-34

W



4 Nf6. In case of the more stubborn 4 Ng7!? Kd3 5 Ne6, both 5…Be3 6 Nd8 Kc4 7 Nc6= and 5…Kc4 6 Ng5 Kb4 (6…f2 7 Ne4) 7 N×f3 K×a4 8 Nd2 Kb4 9 Ke2= are useless. As Müller has demonstrated, Black wins after 5…Be7! 6 Kf2 Ke4 7 Nc7 Bh4+ 8 Kf1 Kd4 9 Nb5+ Kc4 10 Nd6+ Kb4 11 Nf5 Bf6 12 Kf2 K×a4 13 K×f3 Kb3–+.

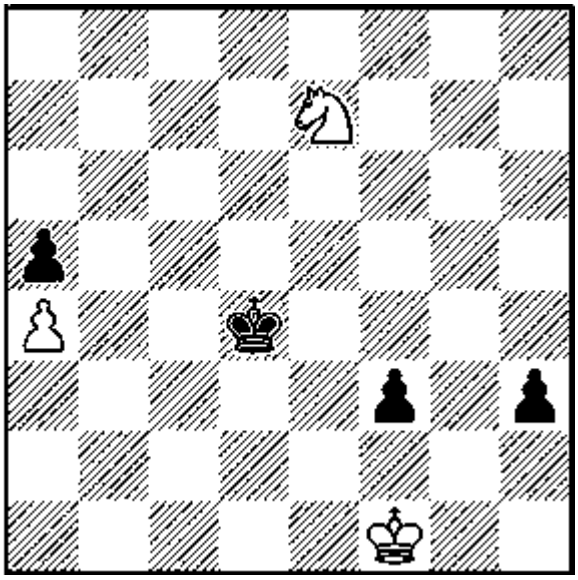
4…Kd4 5 Nd7 Kd5 6 Ke1 Bd4 7 Kd2 Kc4 8 Nb8 Kc5 9 Nd7+ Kb4 10 Nb8 K×a4 11 Nc6 Bb6 12 Ne5 f2 13 Ke2 Kb3 14 Nf3 a4 15 Nd2+ Kb4 White resigned.

White can advance his c-pawn in order to win the bishop for it. It looks highly risky but should be checked, because the alternative is completely hopeless.

1 c5! Bg3 2 c6 h4 3 c7 B×c7 4 N×c7 h3 5 Nd5+ Kd4 (5…Ke4 6 Nf6+ Kf5 7 Nh5=) **6 Ne7!**

16-35

B



6…h2 (6…Ke4 7 Kg1!=) **7 Nf5+ Kc4 8 Ng3 Kb4 9 Kf2 K×a4 10 K×f3 Kb3 11 Kg2 a4 12 Ne2 Kb2** (12…a3 13 Nc1+) **13 Nf4** (we know this drawing position from the Grigoriev's study) **13…Kc3!?** (13…a3 14 Nd3+) **14 Nd5+!** (14 Ne2+? Kd2!–+) **14…Kb3 15 Nf4! a3 16 Nd3**= (Dvoretsky).

2/8. I. Horowitz, I. Kashdan, 1928

White's barrier is not effective: Black plans 1…Kb4 followed by …a5-a4-a3. For example, 1 Ke7? Kb4 2 Kd6 a5 3 Kd5 a4 4 Nc4 Kb5!⊙ 5 Kd4 Kb4 6 Kd3 Kb3=.

A better place for the knight should be investigated.

1 Nb3!! Kb4 2 Na1+–

This barrier is solid enough. An advance of the a-pawn gives Black nothing now: if …a4-a3, then Nc2+ with ba to follow.

We should also explore the attempt to overcome the barrier from the side. As we shall see, it

takes too much time.

1…Kc4!? 2 Na1! Kd3 3 Ke7 Kd2 4 Kd6 a5 (4…Kc1 5 b4! Kb2 6 Kc6!, rather than 6 Kc5? Kc3! ⊙=) 5 Kc5 a4 (5…Kc1 6 b3 Kb2 7 Kb5) 6 Kb4 Kc1 7 Ka3 (7 Kc3) 7…Kb1 8 Nb3!+–.

2/9. Tal-Böök, Stockholm 1960*

Black's king must go to the hostile pawns but 1…Kd4 is met with the fork 2 Ne6+. An advance of the g-pawn enables White to fix the kingside: 1…g6? 2 g5! hg 3 hg a4 4 Kc1! Kd4 5 Ne6+ Ke5 6 Nf8 Kf5 7 Nh7+–, or 1…g5? 2 hg hg 3 Kc1 (3 Ne4+ Kb2 4 N×g5 a4 5 Nf3 a3 6 Nd4 a2 7 Nc2 is also strong) 3…Kd4 4 Nd7! Ke4 5 Kb2 Kf4 6 Nf6 Ke5 7 Nh5+–.

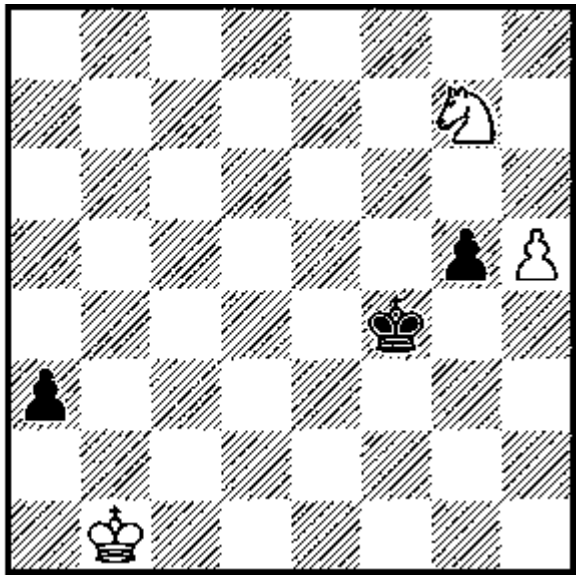
Let's study 1…Kd4? more attentively. We can see that Black loses here, too: 2 Ne6+ Ke5 3 N×g7 Kf4 4 g5 hg 5 h5 Ke5 6 Ne8! (△ 7 h6) 6…Kf5 7 Nd6+ Kf6 8 Ne4+ and 9 Ng3+–, or 5…g4 6 h6 g3 7 Ke2!+–.

However, the last line gives us a tip to the correct solution: first the white king should be diverted to the queenside.

1…a4!! 2 Kc1

After 2 N×a4+ Kd4, neither the knight nor the king can help the pawns in time.

2…a3 (2…Kd4 is also possible already) **3 Kb1 Kd4 4 Ne6+ Ke5 5 N×g7 Kf4 6 g5 hg 7 h5**



7…g4! 8 h6 g3 9 Ne6+ (9 Nh5+ Kg5) **9…Kf5! 10 h7 g2 11 Nd4+ Kg6**=.

Chapter Three

3/1. H. Rinck, 1920

1 Ne7 is met with 1…Nd7 △ 2…Nf6, and 1 Nf6 fails after 1…Nc6 △ 2…Ne7. A win of the knight for the g-pawn gives White nothing; he should try to deflect the knight from the passed pawn, exploiting the fact that Black's king is misplaced.

1 Ne7! Nd7 2 Nc6+ Kb6

In case of 2…Ka6, the deflecting knight sacrifice decides: 3 Nb8+! N×b8 4 g7. And now, again, the same technique rapidly leads to the goal:

3 N×e5! Nf6 4 Nd7+! N×d7 5 e5+–.

3/2. Szabó - Grószpéter, Kecskemet 1984

1 Nd2! N×d2

He must accept the knight sacrifice because both 1…Ne5 2 K×b6 and 1…h4 2 N×c4 h3 3 Ne3 (△ 4 Nf1) 3…h2 4 Ng4+ are quite bad.

2 a5 (2 K×b6? h4)

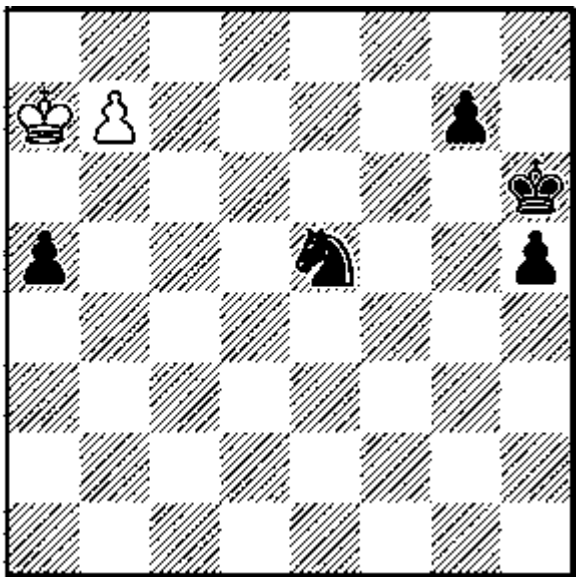
In this position, the game (it was played in a team competition) was adjudicated and White was awarded a win. The main line is instructive and nice:

2…ba

2…h4 3 ab h3 4 b7 h2 5 b8Q h1Q 6 Qh8+; 2…Nc4 3 a6 Nd6 (3…h4 4 Kb8) 4 K×b6 h4 5 Kc5! (5 Kc6? h3; 5 Ka5? Nc4+; 5 a7? Nc8+ 6 Kc5 N×a7 7 b6 Nc6!) 5…Nc8 6 b6+–.

3 b6 Nc4 4 b7 Ne5

16-37



W?

5 Kb8!!

An unusual move: the king interferes with its own pawn! The natural looking 5 Kb6? is wrong: 5…Nd7+ 6 Kc6 (6 Kc7 Nc5) 6…Nb8+ 7 Kc7 a4! (it makes no sense for Black to repeat moves 7…Na6+ 8 Kb6 Nb8) 8 K×b8 a3, with two extra pawns in the resulting queen-and-pawn endgame.

5…Nc6+

5…a4 6 Kc7+–; 5…Nd7+ 6 Kc8!+–.

6 Kc7 Nb4 7 Kb6+–.

3/3. Bonner-Medina, Haifa o1 1976

The goal is achieved by means of a knight sacrifice followed by a pawn breakthrough to the promotion square.

1…Nc3! 2 bc a4 3 cd cd–+

White resigned after 4 c3 a3.

3/4. Vilela-Augustin, Prague 1980

1 Kc5!

Shouldering! 1 a5? does not work in view of

1…Kd6! 2 a6 Ne5!=.

1…f5 (1…Ne5 2 a5 Nd7+ 3 Kc6!+–) **2 a5 f4 3 a6 f3 4 Nc4!**+–

4 a7? f2 5 a8Q f1Q 6 Qe8+ Kf5! leads only to a draw. Now, on the contrary, the white knight holds the f-pawn while the a-pawn cannot be stopped.

The remainder was 4…f2 5 Nd2 Nf6 6 Kc6! (6 a7? Ne4+) 6…Ne4 7 Nf1 and Black resigned.

3/5. Timman-Ree, Amsterdam 1984

1 Nf5?! suggests itself, but what to do after

1…Ng2 ? In case of 2 g6? Nf4 3 g7 Nh5+ 4 Kf7 N×g7 5 K×g7 Kc4, the knight cannot arrive in time to prevent an exchange of queenside pawns. The tempting knight sacrifice deflection 2 Ne3+? N×e3 3 g6 is refuted by 3…Kd6! 4 g7 Nd5+ 5 Kf7 Ne7. As Müller has discovered, White still wins after 2 Ne7+! Kd6 (2…Kc4 3 Ke5 Nh4 4 Kf4+–) 3 g6 Nf4 4 a4 N×g6 5 N×g6 a5 6 b5 Kc5 7 Ke5 Kb4 8 Kd4 K×a4 9 Kc4.

But playing for zugzwang wins much more simply.

1 a4! b5 2 a5⊙ Kc4 3 Nf5 Ng2 4 Ke5! Black resigned.

3/6. V. Halberstadt, 1949

To achieve success, one must remember the triangulation technique.

1 Kg5!! Ka7

If 1…Kb8, then 2 Kf6 Kc8 (2…Kc7 3 Ne6+) 3 Kg7 Nd7 4 N×d7 K×d7 5 Kf7+–.

2 Kf5

The tempo is lost, and Black is in zugzwang.

2…Kb6 3 Nd7+! N×d7 4 e6+–

1 Kf5? misses the win: after 1…Ka7!, it is White who is in zugzwang. 2 Nd7 does not win here in view of 2…N×d7 3 e6 Nb6! 4 e7 Nc8, while 2 Kf6 is met with 2…Kb6=.

3/7. Cvetkovic-Stefanovic, Porec 1987

Thanks to the distant passed a-pawn, the white king is placed closer to the kingside than its counterpart. But how does it save the pawns from annihilation by the black knight? This mission is far from simple.

1 N×h7? N×h2 △ 2…Nf1=;

1 Kd4? N×h2 2 Ke3 Ng4+ 3 Kf3 Nf6=;

1 h4? N×g3 2 Kd4 Ne2+ 3 Ke3 (3 Ke5 Ng1 △ 4…Nf3=) 3…Nc3 4 N×h7 Nd5+ 5 Kf3 K×a4 6 Nf8 Ne7, and White cannot activate his king in time: 7 Ke3 (7 Ke2 Kb4 8 Kd3 Kc5) 7…Nd5+ 8 Ke2!? N×f4+ 9 Kf3 Nh5 10 N×g6 Kb5 11 Ne7 Kc5 12 N×f5 Kd5 13 Kg4 Ke5=

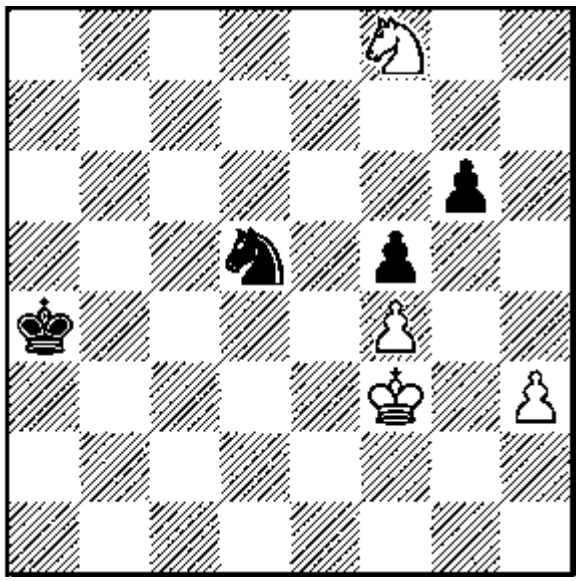
The last line can be improved if White takes a single step with his h-pawn instead of a double. In that case, the king gets an additional route, via h4.

1 h3!! N×g3 2 Kd4! (2 Kd5? Ne2 3 Ke5 Ng1=) **2…Ne2+**

If 2…K×a4 then 3 N×h7 △ 4 Nf8+–. After 2…Nh5, 3 Ke5 decides (rather than 3 Ke3? Nf6).

3 Ke3 Nc3 4 N×h7 Nd5+ 5 Kf3 K×a4 6 Nf8

16-38



B

6…Ne7 is hopeless now: 7 Kg3! Kb4 8 Kh4 Kc4 9 Kg5 Kd5 10 N×g6.

The game continued 6…Kb5 7 N×g6 Kc5 8 Kg3! (the king must be activated) 8…Kd6 9 Kh4 Ke6 10 Kg5 Nc3 11 Nf8+ Kf7 12 Nd7 Ne4+ 13 K×f5, and White had two extra pawns.

Chapter Four

4/1. O. Frink, 1923

1 Bd7!! Ke3 2 h4 Ke4 (2…Kf4 3 Kd4+–) **3 h5 Ke5 4 h6 Kf6 5 Be8!+–**.

According to the computer database, this same study was published a year before by Josef Vancura.

4/2. G. van Breukelen, 1969

Is it possible to prevent the black king’s march to the corner? Yes, if White manages to discover the reciprocal zugzwang positions and reach them with Black to move.

1 Kd7!! Kf4 2 Ke8! Kg5 (2…Kf5 3 Kf7) **3 Ke7!⊙ Kg6 4 Kf8⊙ Kh6** (4…Kf6 5 Bf7) **5 Kf7 Kg5 6 Kg7**+–

1 Kd6? leads only to a draw: 1…Kf4 2 Ke7 (2 Ke6 Kg3!=) Kg5⊙ 3 Ke8 (3 Be6 Kg6=; 3 Kf7 Kh4=) 3…Kf6! (or 3…Kh5!) 4 Kf8 Kg6⊙, because both zugzwang positions arise with White on move.

4/3. A. Gerbstman, 1928

1 b6 ab

1…Kc6 2 Be7! ab (2…Kb7 3 Bd8+–) 3 a6 is the same.

2 a6 Kc6 3 Be7!

Thanks to the threat of 4 Bd8, White distracts the king to c7 winning an extremely important tempo. The straightforward 3 B×d6? does not give more than a draw: 3…b5 4 Bc5 Kc7 5 Ba7 b4 6 Kd3 Kc6 7 Kc4 b3 8 K×b3 Kb5=.

3…Kc7 (3…b5 4 Bd8 d5 5 Kd3 b4 6 Kd4⊙+–) **4 B×d6+! Kc6 5 Kd3 b5 6 Bc5 Kc7 7 Ba7 Kc6 8 Kc3**+–.

4/4. V. Smyslov, 1999

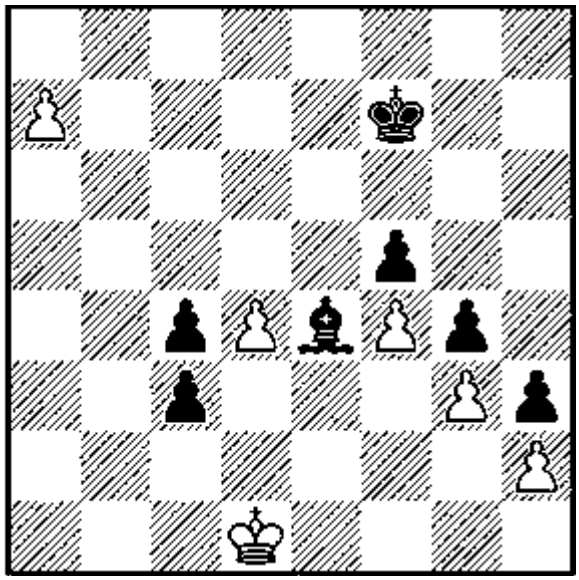
1 Nf1! B×f1 (1…c2 2 Kd2 B×f1 3 f4!!) **2 f4!!**

White's goal is the elementary fortress that we already know. 2 d5? Bg2 3 d6 Kf7 loses.

2…Bg2 (2…gf? 3 a7+–) **3 Kd1!**

3 a7? is wrong in view of 3…Bf3!–+.

3…Be4 4 a7 Kf7



5 d5!

White uses his passed pawns to distract the bishop from protecting its own pawns. The last two moves can be transposed.

5…B×d5 6 Kc2 Ke6 7 K×c3 Kd7 8 a8Q (or 8 Kd4 Kd6 9 a8Q) **8…B×a8 9 K×c4**=

White has only one remaining thing to do: to return his king to g1.

4/5. H. Weenink, 1922

Black's hopes to build an elementary fortress, e.g., 1 Bh7? Kc3 2 Kb5 Kd4 3 Kc6 Ke5 4 g6 (4 Kd7 g6!=) 4…Ke6 5 Bg8+ Ke7=.

White can get the missing tempo by means of a bishop sacrifice followed by shouldering in the arising pawn endgame, but the straightforward attempt 1 Kb4? K×c2 2 Kc4 does not win: 2…Kd2 3 Kd4 Ke2 4 Ke4 Kf2 5 Kf4 (5 Kf5 Kg3 6 Kg6 Kg4=) 5…Kg2 6 Kg4 g6 7 Kf4 Kh3=.

1 Bb1!!

A brilliant move! After 1…Kc3, the bishop is better placed on b1 than on h7: 2 Kb5 Kd4 3 Kc6 Ke5 4 Kd7 g6 (4…Kf4 5 g6+–) 5 Ke7, and the black king cannot step to f5.

1…K×b1 also loses: **2 Kb3 Kc1 3 Kc3 Kd1** (3…Kb1 4 g6+–) **4 Kd3 Ke1 5 Ke3 Kf1 6 Kf3**.

4/6. E. Somov-Nasimovich, 1935

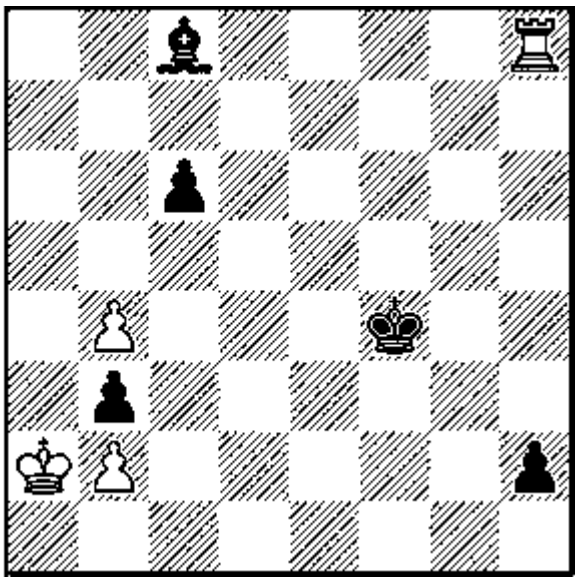
The rook must go back from g8, but where? Only deep, precise calculation can tell.

If 1 Rf8+?, then 1…Bf5 2 g8Q h1Q+ 3 Ka2 Qd5+! 4 Q×d5 cd. The d-pawn can be stopped by means of 5 Kb1 d2+ 6 R×f5+ K×f5 7 Kc2, but the pawn ending turns out to be losing: 7…Ke5 8 K×d2 Kd4 and if 9 b3 then 9…a3–+ (rather than 9…ab? 10 b5=).

1 Rh8! d2 2 g8Q d1Q+ 3 Ka2 Qb3+! 4 Q×b3 ab+

16-40

W?



5 Ka3!!

In case of 5 K×b3? Kg3 6 R×h2 (forced – otherwise 6…Bh3–+) 6…K×h2 7 Kc4 Ba6+! (7…Kg3? 8 Kc5 Bd7 9 Kd6 Be8 10 Ke7 Bh5 11 Kd6 Bf3 12 Kc5 and 13 b5=) 8 Kc5 Bb5, White is lost. 5 Ka1? Kg3 6 R×h2 K×h2 7 b5 c5! is also useless.

5…Kg3 (△ 6…Bh3) **6 R×h2 K×h2 7 b5! cb**

7…c5 makes no sense in view of 8 K×b3=. Now the drawing pawn structure has been built, and all that remains to do is a king retreat homewards.

8 Kb4! Kg3 9 Kc3 Kf2 10 Kd2=.

4/7. H. Seyboth, 1908

1 Bc5? Bh2 2 f4 gf (△ 3…Bg3+) 3 Bf2 loses to 3…Bf4! 4 c5 Bg5! (△ 5…Bh4–+) 5 Bg3+ Kd8 6 Kf2 Be3+. In order to stop the menacing g2-pawn, White must give all his pieces and pawns away.

1 d6+! ed 2 B×d6+! K×d6 3 c5+ K×c5 4 Bf1! gfQ+ 5 K×f1 Bh2 6 f3! g3 (6…gf 7 Kf2) **7 Kg2** (or 7 f4) with a draw.

4/8. P. Kiriakov, 1997

1 c4! (otherwise 1…Ba2–+) **1…b4!** (1…bc? 2 Kd2=) **2 Kd1!**

White must lose a tempo. After 2 Kd2? Kc5, he is put in zugzwang. 3 Kc1 Ba2 4 c3 bc is hopeless, while 3 e4 loses to 3…Kd4! (rather than 3…Ba2? 4 c3).

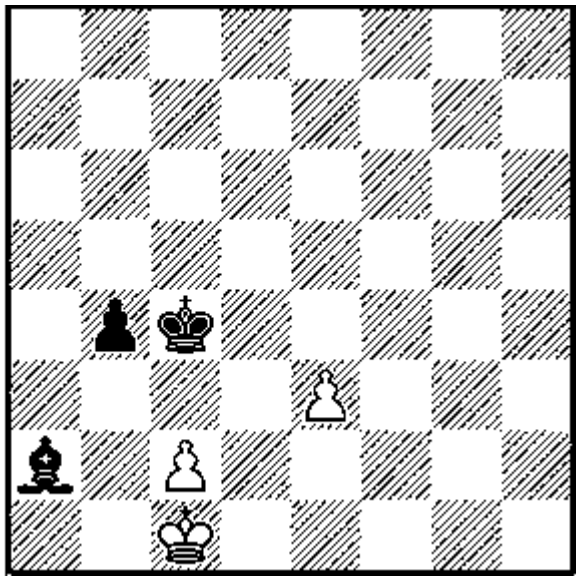
2…Kc5 3 Kd2!

Now it is Black who is in zugzwang, and it may seem that the fight is over: 3…K×c4 4 Kc1 or 3…Ba2 4 c3! b3 5 Kc1=. However Black still has resources.

3…K×c4 4 Kc1 Ba2

16-41

W?



5 Kd2!!⊙

The "obvious" 5 Kb2? is met with 5…Bb3!! 6 cb+ Kd3 with a winning pawn endgame. Now, however, Black cannot avoid the Ponziani position.

5…Kb5 6 c3! b3 7 Kc1=.

4/9. V. & M. Platov, 1911

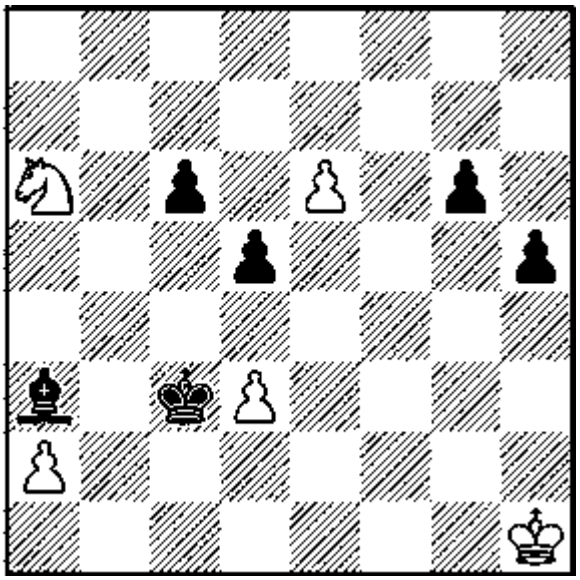
1 h5! gh

1…K×d3 2 hg fg 3 Nc5+! (or 3 Nb4+!) and 4 e6+–.

2 g6! fg 3 e6 Ba3

16-42

W?



4 Nb4!! B×b4 5 a4

"Pants!" Yes the black king is in the square of the a-pawn, but its own pawns and bishop are obstacles in its way ("obstacles" is a method that we have seen when studying pawn endgames.

5…Kd4 6 a5 Kc5 7 e7+–

5…K×d3 does not help: 6 a5 d4 7 a6 Ke2 8 a7 d3 9 a8Q d2 10 Qa2 Ke1 (10…Ke3 11 Qb3+) 11 Kg2! d1Q 12 Qf2#.

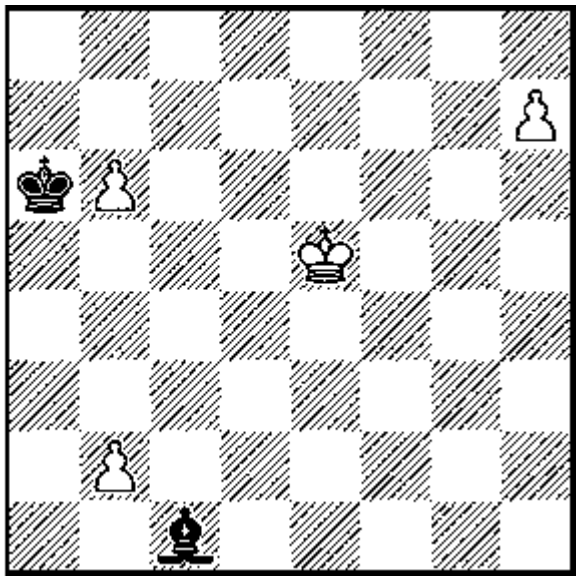
4/10. M. Lewitt, 1933

1 Ke4 Bd8

The first move was obvious, but what to do now? The bishop plans to go to f6, 2 Kf5 will be met with 2…Bb6. 2 Ke5 (hoping for 2…Bc7+? 3 Kd5+–) suggests itself, but Black has a defense: 2…Bg5! 3 h7 Bc1 4 Kd5 B×b2 5 Kc6 Be5! 6 b6 Ka6⊙=. We come to the conclusion that this zugzwang is reciprocal: Black's bishop is overburdened, but how can we reach this position with

Black to play?

2 b6!! Ka6! (2…B×b6 3 h7; 2…K×b6 3 Kf5) **3 Ke5! Bg5 4 h7 Bc1**



5 Kd6! B×b2 6 Kc7! (△ 7 b7) **6…Be5+ 7 Kc6⊙ Bd4 8 b7 Ka7 9 Kc7**+–.

4/11. Minev-Dukanovic, Belgrade 1977

The “pawns in the crosshairs” method is applicable here.

1…Bc1! 2 h7 (2 g6+ Ke7 or 2…Kg8) **2…Kg7 3 g6 Bb2** (3…Kh8 4 f6 Bb2 5 f7 Ba3 6 Ke6 Kg7= is also playable) **4 Ke6** (the threat is 5 f6+ B×f6 6 h8Q+ K×h8 7 K×f6) **4…Kh8! 5 f6 B×f6 6 K×f6** stalemate

In the actual game, however, Black decided to wait, thinking that White would play g5-g6 anyway. But this idea failed.

1…Bc3? 2 h7! Kg7 (2…Bb2 3 f6) 3 Ke6! K×h7

3…Kh8 does not help: 4 f6 Bb2 5 Kf7 (or 5 Ke7) 5…Bc3 6 Ke8! (6 g6? B×f6=) 6…Bb2 (6…K×h7 7 Kf7) 7 f7 Ba3 8 f8Q+ B×f8 9 K×f8 K×h7 10 Kf7 Kh8 11 Kg6! Kg8 12 Kh6+–.

4 Kf7 Kh8 5 g6 Bb2 6 f6 Black resigned.

4/12. Azmaiparashvili-Shirov, Madrid 1996

White’s pawns are very dangerous; this can be seen from the following line: 1…Ke6? 2 Kg5 Bc6 3 f4! Be4 4 g4 (△ 5 f5+) 4…Bh7 (4…Kd7 5 Kh6!) 5 h5 a5 6 Kh6 Be4 7 Kg7+–.

Black should prevent f2-f4 by placing his bishop on f3, where the bishop will keep the advancing gand h-pawns in the crosshairs.

1…Bc6!! 2 Kg5 Bf3! 3 Kf5 Kd5 4 g4 Kd6 5 h5 Kd5 6 Kf4 Bd1 7 Kg5 Bf3!=

White cannot make any progress because 8 h6? Be4 9 f4 Bh7! loses. The remainder was 8 Kf4 Bd1 9 Kg5 Bf3 10 Kf4 Draw.

Chapter Five

5/1. S. Tarrasch, 1921

Black cannot prevent White’s pawns from taking one step forward: to this end, the bishop should have gone to c6. Therefore he must try to reach the basic drawing position with the pawns on the fifth rank (the bishop on f7 or g8, the king on d7).

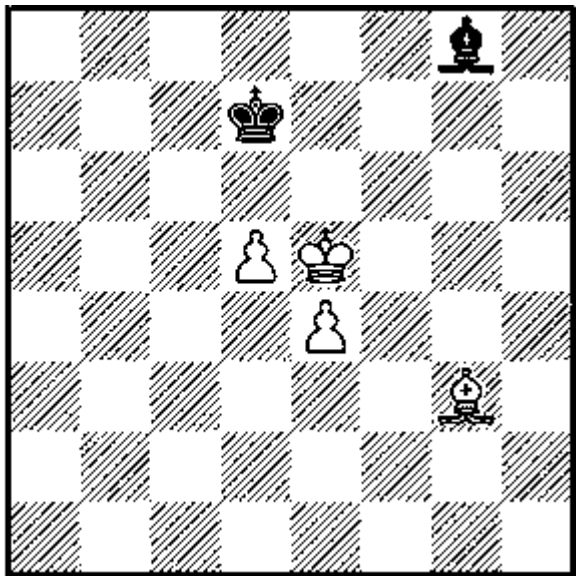
1…Bb5? is wrong in view of 2 Bb4+! (rather than 2 Bg3+? Ke7! 3 d5 Be8 4 e5 Bf7=) 2…Ke6 (2…Kc7 3 d5 Be8 4 e5 Bf7 5 e6) 3 d5+ Ke5 4 Bc3+ Kd6 5 Kd4 Be8 6 e5+. Black is a single tempo short in all these lines.

1…Bc4! 2 Bg3+ Kc6!

Of course not 2…Ke6? 3 Kd2 and 4 Kc3 planning the king’s march to c5. As soon as the black king leaves e6, White plays d4-d5, and the bishop does not get to f7.

3 Kf4 Bg8 4 Ke5 Kd7 5 d5

16-44



B

5…Bh7!

Pawns in the crosshairs: Black does not let the white king to go to f6. In the meantime, 5…Bf7 6 Kf6 Ke8! 7 Bf4 Bg8 is less precise but still good enough for a draw.

6 Kf4 Bg6 7 e5 Bf7!=.

5/2. Schöneberg-Starck, DDR ch, Weimar 1968

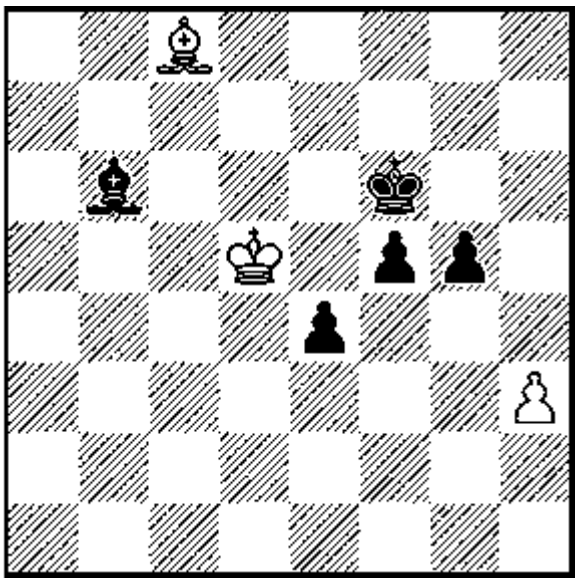
Black's intentions are obvious: …Ke5-f6 followed with …e5-e4. This plan can be parried only by a king assault on d5 (similar to diagram 5-5). But prior to it, White should get rid of his own b5-pawn, which only snarls his plans (positional factors are more important than pawns!).

1 b6!! B×b6

Attempting to save a tempo by ignoring the b6-pawn fails: if 1…Ke5, then the simplest is 2 Kf3 Kf6 3 Ke2 e5 4 Kd3 B×b6 5 Kc4, but 2 b7 Ba7 3 Kf3 Kf6 4 Ke2 e5 5 b8Q!! B×b8 6 Kd3 e4+ 7 Kd4 is also playable.

2 Kf3 Ke5 3 Ke2! Kf6 4 Kd3 e5 5 Kc4 e4 6 Kd5

16-45



B

6…e3

In case of 6…Kg6 (with the idea 7…e3 8 Ba6 Kh5), both 7 Ke5 Bc7+ 8 Kd4= and 7 Kc4 f4 8 Kd5! e3 9 Bg4= are good.

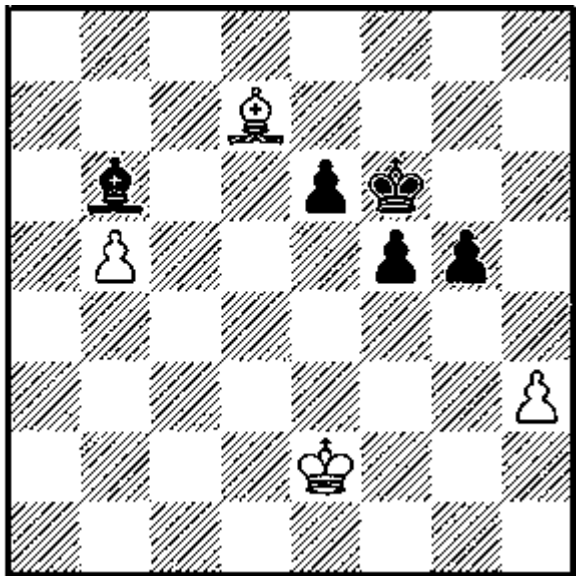
7 Ba6

The draw is obvious now, e.g., 7…g4 (7…Kg6 8 Be2) 8 hg fg 9 Ke4 (9 Bf1?? g3) 9…Kg5 10 Kd3! Kh4 11 Ke2 Kg3 and now either 12 Bc8 or 12 Kf1 Kh2 13 Bb7.

In the game, however, White failed to tackle the problem he was faced with.

1 Kf3? Ke5? (1…Bb6! was winning) 2 Bd7? (he could have saved the game with 2 b6! again) 2…Bb6!–+ 3 Ke2 Kf6.

16-46



W

The pawn is stopped on b5 where it blocks the important a6-f1 diagonal, so the king's march is not possible anymore: 4 Kd3 e5 5 Kc4 e4 6 Kd5 e3–+.

4 Kf3 e5 5 Bc6 Ke6 6 Bb7 e4+

This win of the bishop leads to a quick finish. Black could also have won another way: 6…Kd6!? followed by …Kc5-d4, as in the theoretical positions we have studied.

7 B×e4 fe+ 8 K×e4 Bf2

8…Bc7 also leads to the goal: 9 b6 Bb8 (9…B×b6?? 10 h4!=) 10 Kf3 (10 h4 g4) 10…Kf5 11 Ke3 Kg6–+.

9 b6 Kd6 10 Kf5 Bh4 White resigned.

Before we leave this example, I want to draw your attention to another defensive possibility: a pawn sacrifice on the kingside.

1 h4?! gh

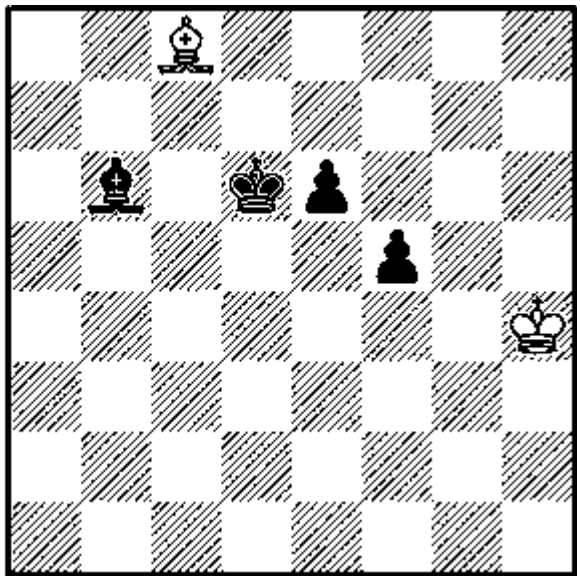
1…g4? seems to lead to a draw: 2 h5 Be3 3 Kf1 f4 4 Ke2 (rather than 4 h6? f3 5 h7 g3–+, but 4 Kg2!? is playable: 4…Ke5 5 h6 f3+ 6 Kg3 B×h6 7 b6 Kf5 8 B×e6+! K×e6 9 b7 f2 10 b8Q) 4…Bd4 5 Kd3 f3 (△ 6…g3) 6 Bb7 Bg7 7 Be4! (7 b6? Kc5 8 B×f3 gf 9 b7 Be5–+) 7…Kc5 8 Ke3 Bh6+ 9 Kf2= △ 10 Kg3.

2 Kh3 Bf2!? 3 b6

In case of 3 Kg2 Bb6 4 Kh3, Black can choose between 4…Bd8 5 b6□ B×b6 and 4…Ke5!? 5 K×h4 Kf6 6 Kg3 e5 7 Bb7 e4 8 Kf4 Bc7+ 9 Ke3 Ke5.

3…B×b6 4 K×h4

16-47



B?

Can Black win here? Frankly, I started the analysis of 1 h4 mainly to answer this question.

4…Ke7!

The incautious move 4…Ke5? allows White to save the position by means of 5 Kg5! (△ Kg6-f7). The same technique as in the 1 b6!! line – the king attacks the pawns from the rear!

5 Kg5 Kf7! 6 Kf4

If 6 Ba6 Be3+! 7 Kh4, then either 7…e5 or 7…Bf4, but in any event not 7…Kf6?? 8 Kg3 e5 9 Kf3 and 10 Bd3=.

6…Kf6 7 Kf3 e5 8 Bb7

To play …e5-e4, Black must bring his king to d4, but before that, as we already know, he should take control of the f4-square by transferring his bishop to h6.

8…Bc5 9 Bd5 Bf8!

White has two alternative defensive strategies: one is waiting, another involves the king transfer to d3.

(a) 10 Bc6 Bh6 11 Bb7 Ke7 12 Bc6 Kd6 13 Bb7 Bg5! 14 Ba8 Kc5 15 Bb7 Kd4–+. Notice the premature 13…Kc5? (instead of 13…Bg5!) allows White to save himself: 14 Bc8! e4+ 15 Ke2! (rather than 15 Kf2? f4 16 Bh3 Kd4! 17 Bg2 Kd3) 15…f4 16 Bh3! f3+ (otherwise 17 Bg2 leads to a basic drawing position) 17 Kf2, and there is no defense to Bh3-g4xf3.

(b) **10 Ke3 Bh6+ 11 Kd3 Kg5 12 Bg2**

This plan is familiar to us from the previous exercise. However it fails here due to zugzwang.

12…Kf4 13 Bh3 e4+ 14 Ke2 Bf8 15 Kf2 Bc5+ 16 Ke2 Kg5!⊙ (but not 16…Ke5 17 Bg2 f4?? 18 Bh1=) **17 Bg2 Kg4 18 Kf1 Kg3 19 Bh1 Kh2 20 Bg2 Bd4**⊙–+.

5/3. A. Chéron, 1957

1…Bc7!

The diagonal b8-h2 is quite long, but only two squares are available for the bishop: b8 and c7. Both 1…Bd6? 2 Kf5 Kd4 3 Ke6 Kc5 4 Kd7+– and 1…Bh2? 2 Kf5 Kd4 3 f4+– are bad.

2 Kf5 Kd4! 3 Ke6 (3 f4 Ke3) **3…Kc5 4 Kd7 Kb6** (the king "maintains the zone" quite successfully) **5 Be8 Bb8! 6 Ke6 Kc5 7 Kf5 Kd4 8 Kg4 Ke3 9 Bh5 Bc7!**=.

5/4. A. Norlin, 1922

White's king wants to go to f8, to help its pawn that is stopped by the black bishop, but Black then advances his pawn, deflecting the white bishop from the c7-pawn.

The principle of "the single diagonal" is helpful here. White should transfer his bishop to a5, where it will protect the c7-pawn and hold back the black one. For this purpose, he must first protect the c7-pawn with the king, without allowing …a7-a5-a4 (with the pawn on a4, it is a draw, e.g., 1 Kc5? a5! 2 Kb5 a4 3 Kb4 Kc8=).

1 Kc3! Bf7 2 Kb4 Be6 3 Be5!

The bishop should now clear the d6-square. 3 Kc5?! is inaccurate in view of 3…Bb3! with the

threat 4…a5.

3…Kc8!?

If 3…Bf7, then 4 Kc5 Kc8 (4…a5 5 Kb5; 4…Bb3 5 Kd6 Kc8 6 Bc3) 5 Kc6! (6 Bc3 is threatened) 5…Be8+ (5…a5 6 Kb5) 6 Kd6 Bf7 7 Bc3! and 8 Ba5.

4 Kb5!

The author's line, 4 Kc5 Bb3! 5 Kb5! Kb7 6 Kb4! and 7 Kc5, is a little bit slower than this.

4…Kb7 (5 Ka6 was threatening) **5 Kc5 Bb3 6 Kd6** (△ 7 Kd7) **6…Kc8 7 Bc3!**

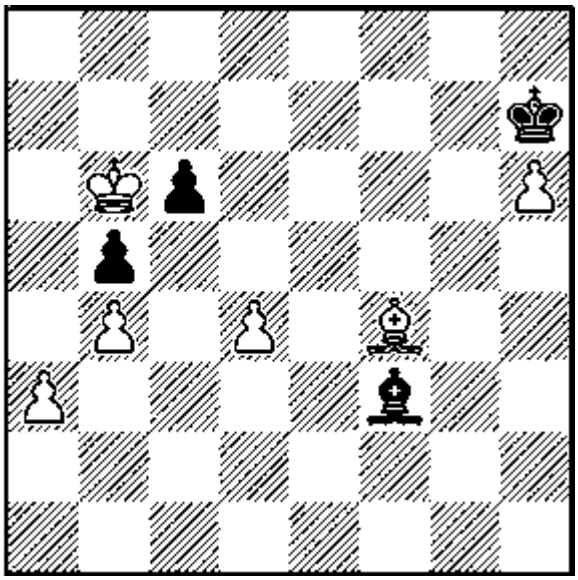
White has carried out his plan. With his next move, he places the bishop on a5 and then advances his king to f8.

5/5. Berezhnoy-Gusev, Rostov-Don 1972

1…Ke6!

The king runs to the h-pawn, reaching the first defensive position. But can the bishop prevent the creation of another passed pawn on the queenside?

2 h5 Kf7 3 h6 Kg6 4 Bf4 Kh7 5 Kb6



5…Bd5!

The game continued 5…Be4?? 6 Ka5 Kg6 (6…Bc2 7 d5!+–) 7 a4 ba 8 K×a4 Kf7 9 b5, and Black resigned.

6 Ka5 Bb3!

White has no win. 7 a4 ba 8 b5 cb 9 K×b5 a3 is useless – the a-pawn will deflect the bishop from protecting its own pawn.

It is worth mentioning that reaching the first defensive position is the only correct plan for Black. Yes, after 1…Be2, the immediate 2 d5 cd 3 K×d5 does not succeed in view of 3…Bd1! 4 Bd6 (4 Kc5 Ba4=) 4…Ke8 5 Ke6 Bb3+ 6 Kf6 Bd1=. But White plays 2 Bf4 Bf3 3 Be5, and 3…Ke6! is quite necessary here, because the prolonged passive policy 3…Be2? loses to 4 d5 cd 5 K×d5 Bd1 (5…Ke7 6 Kc5, planning Kb6-a5 and a3-a4+–) 6 Kc5 Ke6 (6…Ba4 7 h5 Ke6 8 h6) 7 K×b5! K×e5 8 Kc6! (shouldering in the most precise way) 8…Bf3+ 9 Kc7 Be2 10 a4+–.

5/6. Tringov-Smyslov, Reykjavik 1974

The f2-pawn must go forward, but where?

The game continued 1 f4? Bg1! 2 Kd3 Bh2 3 Ke3 Kf6.

Black has chained his opponent to the defense of the f4-pawn and now directs his king to b2. White has no answer to this simple plan. By the way, the bishop has gone to h2 (rather than c7) in order not to interfere with the king when it steps to d6.

4 Ba2 Ke7 5 Bg8 Kd6 6 Bf7 Kc5 7 Ba2 (7 Be6 Kb4 8 Kd3 B×f4 9 Kc2 Be5! 10 B×f5 a2–+) 7…Kb4 8 Kd4 B×f4 9 Kd5 Bg3 10 Kd4 f4 White resigned.

In endings with opposite-color bishops, the defender should keep his pawns on the squares of

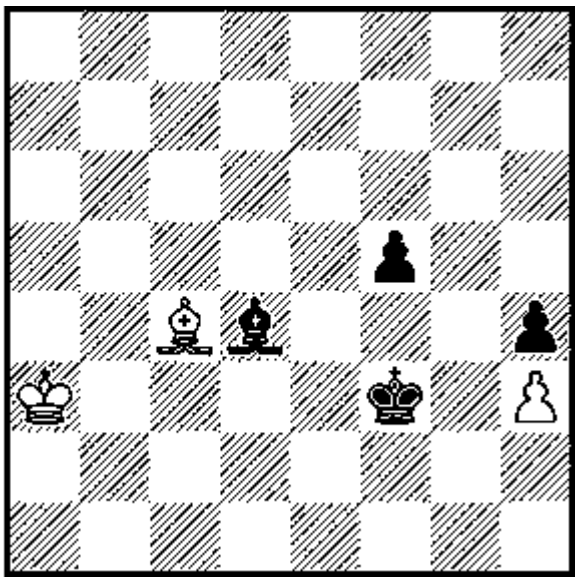
his bishop's color. Therefore **1 f3!** suggests itself, having in mind the first defensive position. The bishop can protect kingside pawns easily when the king stands on b3 (if …Kf4, then Be6!, and if …f5-f4, then the bishop goes to g4). The question is whether White can build this setup in time.

1…Kf6 2 Kd3 Ke5!

The eventual consequences of 3 Kc2 Kf4 4 Kb3 (4 Be6? K×f3 5 B×f5 a2) 4…K×f3 (4…Bc5? 5 Be6=) 5 K×a3 are not so easy to calculate right now.

16-49

B?



After the apparently natural 5…f4?, White's king comes to the kingside in time: 6 Kb3 Kg3 7 Kc2 f3 (7…K×h3 8 Kd3 △ Bd5, Ke2=) 8 Kd3 K×h3 (8…Bb6 9 Bd5; 8…f2 9 K×d4) 9 K×d4 Kg3 (9…Kg2 10 Bd5) 10 Ke3 f2 (10…h3 11 Bd5 f2 12 Ke2=) 11 Bf1=.

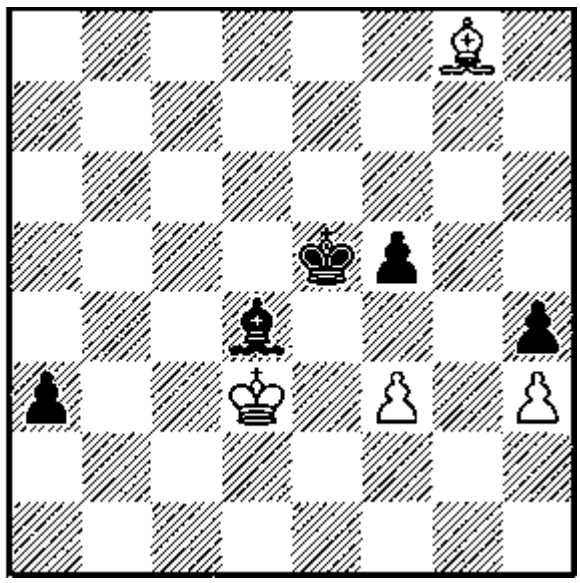
However, Black can successfully apply the "shouldering" technique we have already seen in pawn endgames: 5…Ke3!! 6 Kb3 Kd2! 7 Bd5 (7 Be6 f4 8 Bg4 Ke3 9 Kc2 f3 10 Kd1 Kf2 11 Be6 Kg1–+) 7…f4 8 Bc6 Bb6 9 Bd5 Ke2! (△ …f3-f2) 10 Bc4+ Kf2 11 Kc2 f3 12 Kd1 (12 Bd5 Ke2) 12…Kg1, winning.

The alternative 3 f4+? K×f4 4 K×d4 does not help either: 4…Kg3 5 Ke3 f4+ 6 Ke2 f3+ 7 Kf1 K×h3 8 Kf2 Kg4–+.

But the position is drawn after all! White should make a waiting move, for example **3 Bg8!**, and Black turns out to be in zugzwang (a unique case: the stronger side is in zugzwang in a sharp fight for tempi in the forthcoming race).

16-50

B



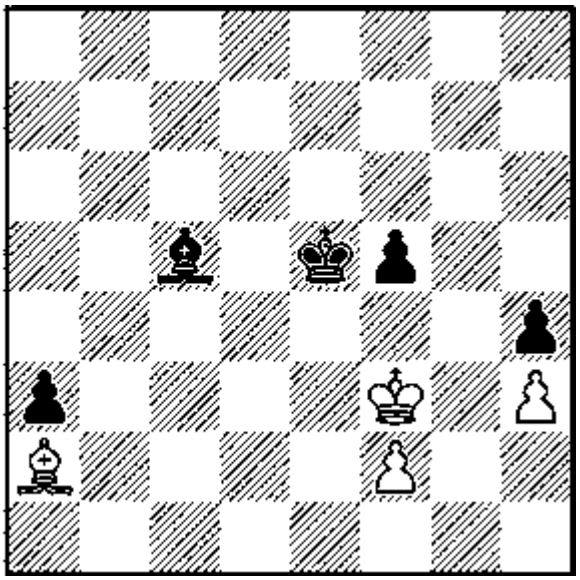
If the bishop retreats from d4, White can transpose to the first defensive position: 4 Kc2 Kf4 5 Be6! K×f3 6 B×f5, and 6…a2 is not dangerous for him anymore, while after **3…Kf4!? 4 K×d4 K×f3**, the king is placed worse on f3 than on g3 (see the line 3 f4+?), and this circumstance allows

White to save the game: **5 Bd5+! Kg3 6 Ke3 f4+** (6…K×h3 7 Kf3, locking the king on the h-file) **7 Ke2 f3+ 8 Kf1! K×h3 9 Kf2 Kg4 10 B×f3+** (analysis by Dvoretsky).

I want to mention that Nikolay Minev, when annotating this endgame for the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*, was very close to unlocking the secrets of this position: he analyzed 3 Ba2 Bg1 4 Kc3 Kf4 5 Bd5 Kg3 6 Kb3 f4–+. Of course, instead of 5 Bd5?, White has to play 5 Be6!= (“pawns in the crosshairs!”).

At the training session for young Russian players I led in the spring of 2001, my apprentices suggested another defensive plan for White: 1 Kf3 Kf6 2 Ba2 Ke5 3 Bg8 Bc5 4 Ba2.

16-51



The king cannot now go to d4 in view of 5 Kf4, therefore Black must play 4…Bf8 with the idea of 5…Bh6 and only then, finally, 6…Kd4. White responds with 5 Ke3! Bh6+ 6 Kd3, closing the way to the black king. However, after 6…Kf4 (7…Kf3 was threatened) 7 Bd5 Bf8 (the bishop wants to go to c5 in order to attack the f2-pawn) 8 Kc2 Bc5 9 Kb3 B×f2 10 K×a3, Black wins by the familiar “shouldering” technique: 10…Ke3!! 11 Kb3 Kd2!.

5/7. Simagin-Janssen, wchsf cr 1967

The second defensive position is present. According to the rules, a road for the king to the h5-pawn should be paved, but how does one do so? The straightforward attempt 1 Kb2 Kb6 2 Ka3 Bg5 3 Ka4 Bh6 4 a3 Bg5 5 b4 ab 6 ab cb 7 K×b4 allows Black to build an unassailable fortress by means of 7…Bd2+! 8 Kb3 Kc5.

The breakthrough a2-a3 and b3-b4 (followed with c4-c5) should be carried out when the king is on d3. The bishop belongs on a4 where it deprives the black king of important squares and restrains Black’s eventual passed b-pawn that soon appears.

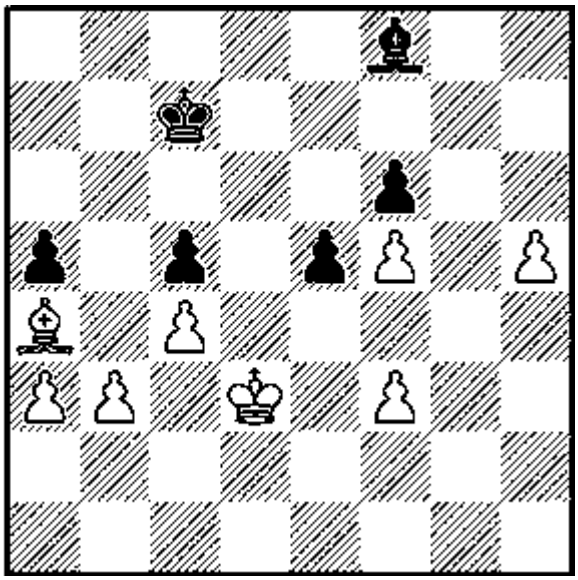
1 Bf7! Bf8 2 Be8 Bh6 3 a3 (△ 4 b4) **3…Bf8**

If 3…Kb6, then 4 Kd3 (△ Ke4-d5) 4…Kc7 5 b4! ab 6 ab cb 7 c5 b3 (7…Bf8 8 Kc4 b3 9 Ba4 b2 10 Bc2+–) 8 Kc3 (or 8 Ba4 b2 9 Bc2+–) 8…Bf8 9 c6+–.

4 Ba4!⊙ **Kb6** (in case of 4…Bh6 or 4…Kd6, 5 b4 is decisive) **5 Kd3** (△ Ke4-d5) **5…Kc7**

16-52

W?



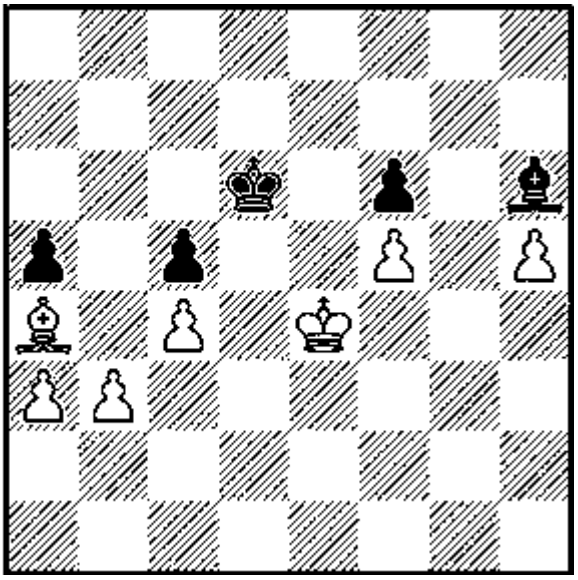
6 b4! ab 7 ab cb 8 c5!

Black resigned because of 8…B×c5 (8…b3 9 Kc4 b2 10 Bc2) 9 Kc4 Bf8 (9…Kd6 10 h6) 10 Kd5 Kd8 11 Ke6+–.

Other winning methods for White are not apparent. I tried 6 Ke4 (instead of 6 b4) 6…Kd6 7 f4 ef 8 K×f4 Bh6+ 9 Ke4.

16-53

B?



The idea works after 9…Bd2? 10 b4! ab 11 ab cb 12 Kd4 Bh6 (12…Bc3+ 13 Kd3) 13 c5+. But Black's defense can be improved: 9…Bc1! (strangely enough, this is reciprocal zugzwang!) 10 Bb5 (10 b4 ab 11 ab cb 12 Kd4 Bb2+!; 10 Be8 Ke7 △ 11…B×a3) 10…Ke7! (△ B×a3) 11 b4 ab 12 ab (12 a4 b3 13 Kd3 Kd6 also leads to a draw) 12…Kd6!=.

Chapter Six

6/1. L. Centurini, 1847

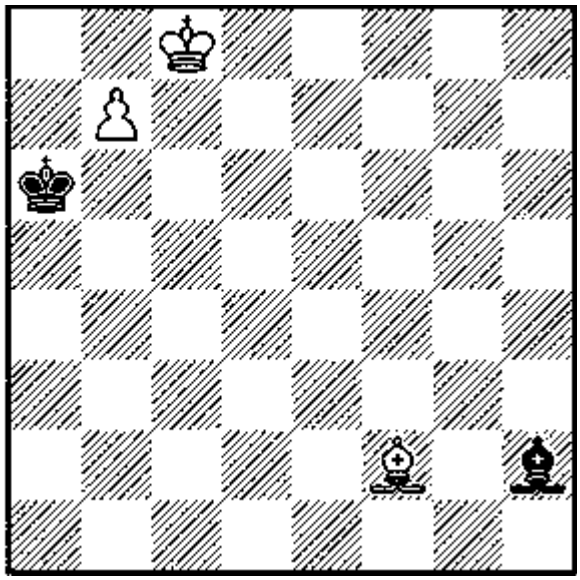
1 Bh4

The bishop wants to go to b8; if it manages to get there, the fight will be over immediately. So Black tries to prevent it.

1…Kb5! 2 Bf2 Ka6

16-54

W?



If White now directs the bishop to c7, then the black king returns to c6 in time. After 3 Be3 Bd6! 4 Bg5 Kb5 5 Bd8 Kc6, there is no sense in 6 Be7 Bh2, because the white bishop cannot enter the g1-a7 diagonal immediately. But if the black bishop occupies some other position, White could win the decisive tempo by means of deflection.

3 Bc5!⊙ Be5 4 Be7 Kb5 5 Bd8 Kc6 6 Bf6! Bh2 7 Bd4 △ Ba7-b8+–.

6/2. Zviagintsev-Chernin, Portoroz 1997

White wins if he manages to advance the pawn to b6 and to penetrate to a7 with his king. Black's initial move 1…Kf6? allowed White to carry out this plan unhindered.

2 b5 Ke7 3 b6 Be2 4 Bc6! Kd6 (4…Kd8 5 Bb5 B×b5 6 K×b5+–) 5 Bb5 Bf3 6 Ka6 Kc5 7 Bf1.

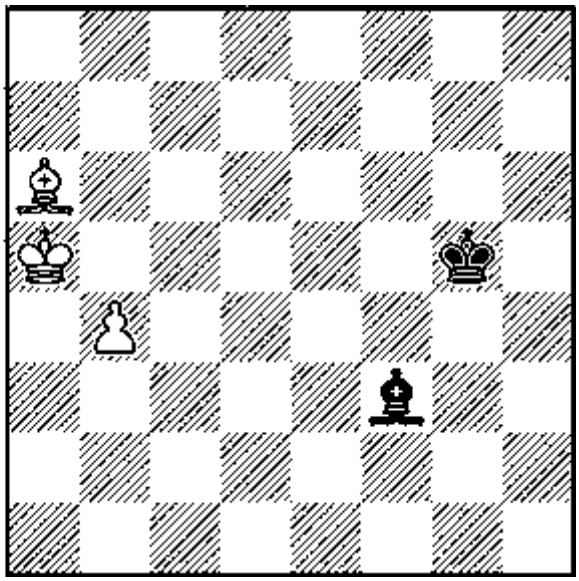
Black resigned. The king transfer to the rear of the white king (7…Kb4 8 Ka7 Ka5) cannot help here because the a6-c8 diagonal, where the bishop will be forced, is too short.

As Zviagintsev has demonstrated, Black could have held the game.

1…Be2! 2 Ba6 Bf3

16-55

W



3 b5

If 3 Bf1, then 3…Bc6! (rather than 3…Kf6? 4 b5 Ke7 5 Ka6+–) 4 Kb6 Be8 5 Kc7 Kf6 6 Kd6 Ba4 7 Bc4 Be8 8 Bd5 Bb5 9 Kc5 Be8 10 Bc6 Bh5 11 b5 Ke7 12 b6 Kd8=.

3…Kf6 4 b6 Ke7 5 Bf1

5 Bc8 Kd8 6 Bf5 Bb7 or 6…Be2 gives nothing – the king cannot get to a7.

5…Bb7 6 Kb5 Kd8

6…Kd6 is also playable, but after 7 Bh3 he must retreat anyway: 7…Ke7□.

7 Bh3 Ke7 8 Kc5 Kd8 9 Kd6 Bf3 10 Be6 Bb7!=

A position of reciprocal zugzwang has arisen, with White on move (see diagram 6-3).

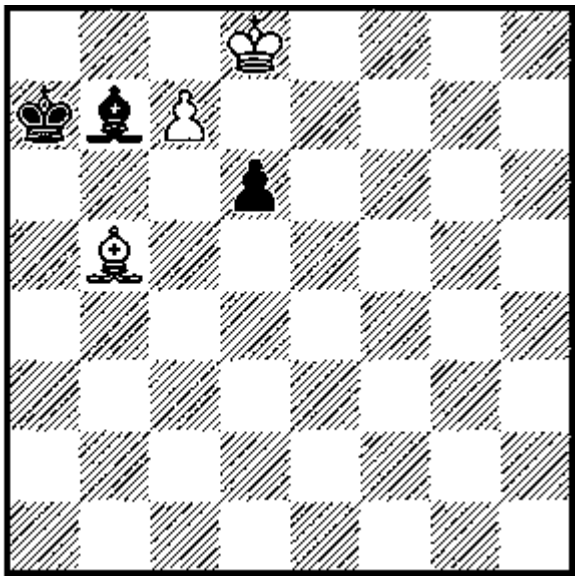
6/3. Y. Hoch, 1977

The initial moves are easy to find.

1 Kd8 Bb7 2 c7+ Ka7 3 Bc6! Ba6 4 B×b5 Bb7

16-56

W?



5 Bc6!!

But here precise calculation is required to the end. Only then will the reason for this zwischenzug be clear.

5…Ba6 6 Bd7 Kb6 (6…d5 7 Bc8 Bf1 8 Bb7 Bh3 9 Bc6 d4 10 Bd7+–) **7 Bc8 Bf1 8 Bb7 Bh3**

Now White should bring his bishop to d7 as soon as possible (before the black king comes to d6).

9 Bg2! Be6 (9…Bg4 10 Bf3!; 9…Bf5 10 Be4!) **10 Bd5! Bh3 11 Bf7 Kc5 12 Be8** △ Bd7+–

Black's d6-pawn caused his downfall because it stood in the way of his own king. If White had not find the correct continuation on the fifth move, Black could have gotten rid of the pawn: 5 Bd7? Kb6 6 Bc8 Bg2 (or 6…Bd5) 7 Ba6 Bh3 8 Bf1 Be6! 9 Bc4 d5! 10 B×d5 Bh3 11 Bf7 Kc5 12 Be8 Kd6=.

6/4. J. Sulz, 1948

White has a clear plan: to drive the black bishop off the a3-f8 diagonal and create an interference on f6. Black's only hope is the advance of his h-pawn because his king cannot get to f5 in time. The hope is not completely groundless, as can be seen from the line 1 Bh4? h5! 2 Be7 Ba5! 3 Bf8 Bd8 4 Bg7 h4 5 Bf6 h3! 6 B×d8 h2 7 e7 h1Q=.

1 Be1!!

A subtle zwischenzug that provides the important b4-square to the bishop in the future.

1…Bc5 2 Bh4 h5! (2…Kd5 3 Be7 Bb6 4 Bf8 Bd8 5 Bg7 Ke4 6 Bf6+–) **3 Be7 Bb6 4 Bb4! Bd8 5 Ba5!**

This is the point! The black bishop is forced out from the comfortable d8-square.

5…Bg5 6 Bc3 h4 7 Bf6 B×f6 (7…h3 8 e7) **8 K×f6 h3 9 e7**+–.

6/5. I. Agapov, 1981

The task of utilizing the material advantage is rather difficult here because the white king is out of play forever. For example, the straightforward attempt 1 c7? Kh4 2 c8Q B×c8 3 B×c8 Kg3 leads to a draw. ***Connected passed pawns are often impotent when they are fixed on squares of their bishop's color.***

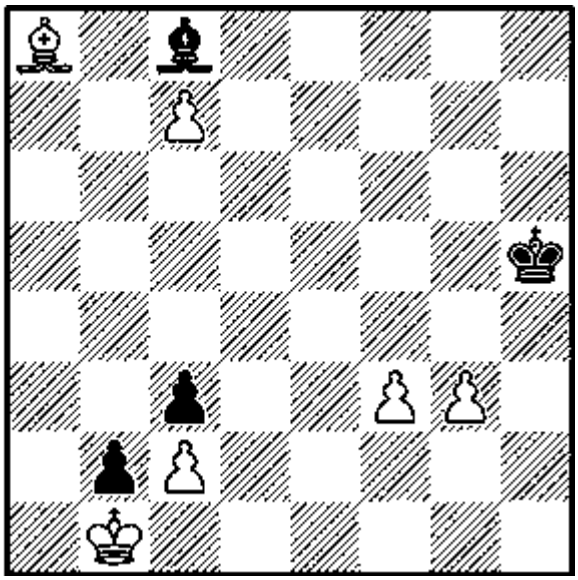
1 g3!

Now 2 c7+– is threatened. Black prevents the pawn advance with a pinning technique, similar to the Capablanca-Janowsky ending we have seen already.

1…Bd5! 2 Ba8! (△ 3 c7 Be6 4 Bb7+–; 2 f4? is wrong in view of 2…Kg4 3 Bc8+ K×g3=) **2…Be6!** (2…B×f3? 3 c7 Bg4 4 Bf3+–) **3 c7 Bc8**

16-57

W?



What to do now? In case of 4 f4? Kg4 5 Be4 Bd7, White cannot make any progress.

We might consider the idea of a bishop sacrifice on h3 with the interference g3-g4 to follow. But this plan is difficult to carry out, because Black can respond with a king march to the c7-pawn. For example, 4 Be4? Kg5 5 Bd3 Kf6! 6 Bf1 (6 f4 Ke7=; 6 g4 Kg5 7 Bf5 Ba6=) 6…Ke7 7 Bh3? B×h3 8 g4 Kd7–+.

The bishop should therefore be transferred to e8 first, so that Black will be forced to defend the h5-square in order to avoid the bishop exchange Bh5-g4. Only when the black king is farthest from the queenside can the main plan be successful.

4 Bc6! Kg6!? 5 Be8+ Kg5 6 Bf7!⊙ Kh6 (6…Bd7 7 Bc4 Kf6 8 Ba6) **7 Bc4!**

There is no other way to win: 7 f4? Kg7 8 Bh5 Kf6 9 g4 Ke6 10 g5 Ke7!!⊙ (10…Kf5? 11 Bg4+; 10…Kd6? 11 g6 K×c7 12 g7 Be6 13 f5) 11 Bg6 (11 Bf3 Kd6=) 11…Kd6= gives only a draw.

7…Kg6 8 Bf1 Kf6 9 Bh3! B×h3 10 g4+–.

6/6. Lasker-Bogatyrchuk, Moscow 1935

White cannot do without e3-e4. The game continued 1 e4? d4! 2 Bc4 Bb7 3 Kg5 Bc8 4 Kf4 Kd7 5 Kf3 Bb7 6 Ke2 Bc8 7 Kd3 Bb7 8 K×d4 Bc8 9 Ke3 Bb7 and a draw was agreed. In the final position, White's own e4-pawn only causes him trouble because it closes the important h1-a8 diagonal. Without this pawn, White would have had the upper hand. So the correct plan is a king transfer to d4 prior to the advance e3-e4.

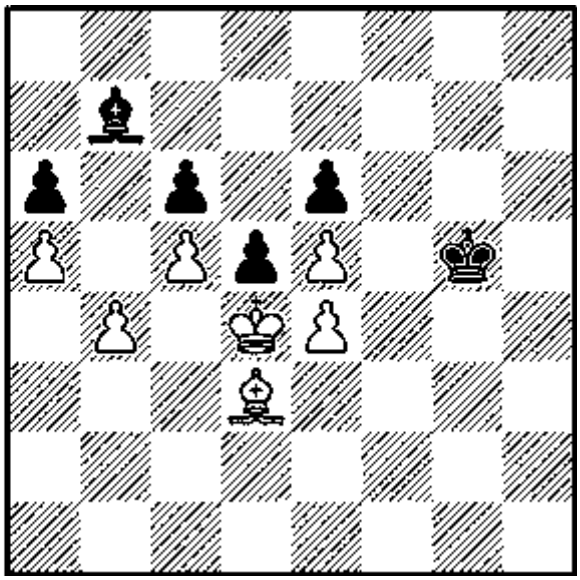
1 Kg5! Kf7 2 Kf4

As Grigoriev demonstrated, 2 Bg6+! Ke7 3 Kf4 would have been even more precise. However, even with an active king, Black is faced with severe problems.

2…Kg7 3 Kf3 Kh6 4 Ke2 Kg5 5 Kd2 Kg4 6 Kc3 Kg5 7 Kd4 Bb7 8 e4!

16-58

B



If now 8…Bc8, then 9 ed ed 10 Bf1 Kg6 11 Kd3 Kg5 12 Ke3⊙ Kg4 (12…Kg6 13 Kf4; 12…Bb7 13 Bh3) 13 e6+–.

8…de 9 B×e4 Kh5 10 Kd3 Kg5 11 Ke3⊙ Kh6

11…Ba8 12 b5! ab 13 a6 b4 14 Bc2 △ Bb3+–;

11…Kg4 12 Bg6 Kg5 13 Bf7! Kf5 14 Kd4 Bc8 15 Be8 Bb7 16 Bd7⊙+–.

12 Kf4 Kg7 13 Kg5 Kf7 14 Kh6 Ke7 15 Kg7⊙ Ba8 16 b5! ab 17 a6+–.

6/7. Stefanov-Beliavsky, Bucharest 1980

Beliavsky has calculated quite well that, after the exchange of dark-square bishops, he will be able to create a solid barrier against White's king.

1…Be5+! 2 B×e5 K×e5 3 Kd3

If 3 c7 Bb7 4 Bd3 (△ Bf5), then 4…Kd6 5 Kd4 Bc8! (5…K×c7 is less strong, but Black perhaps can survive after 6 Ke5 Bf3 7 Kf5 Kd6 8 K×g5 Ke5) 6 Bf5 B×f5 7 gf K×c7 8 Ke5 Kd7 9 f6 g4 10 Kf4 Ke6 11 K×g4 K×f6=, or 6 Be2 Be6(d7)=.

3…Bd5 4 Ke3 Be6 5 Bf3 Bc8=

White cannot utilize his extra pawn. The defense is successful mainly because all of White's pawns are on the squares of their own bishop's color.

6 Bd1 Be6 7 Kf3 Bd5+ 8 Kg3 Kd6 9 Be2 Be6 10 Bd3 Bd5 11 Kf2 Be6 12 Kf3 Bd5+ 13 Ke3 Be6 14 Be2 Ke5 15 Bf3 Bc8 16 c7 Kd6 17 Kd4 Bd7 18 Be2 Bc8 19 Ke4 Bd7 20 Kd4 Bc8 Draw.

Chapter Seven

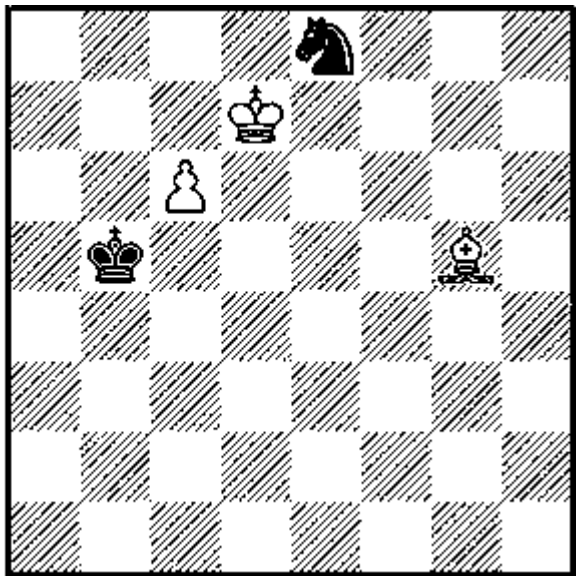
7/1. P. Seuffert, 1856

Reciprocal zugzwang arises with the bishop on d4 and the king on b5 or d5. We have discussed an almost identical position, only moved one file to the right (diagram 7-2), where Black could successfully avoid a zugzwang. Here he fails to do so.

1 Bc3! Kb6□ 2 Ba5+! Kb5 3 Bd8 Kc5 4 Bg5 Kb5

16-59

W?



5 Bh4!⊙

This waiting move was not possible in the above-mentioned case: the edge of the board was closer.

5…Kc5 6 Bf2+ Kd5 7 Bd4⊙ **Nd6 8 c7**+–.

7/2. L. Katsnelson, 1979

1 Kb1!

The line 1 g4? Kc2 2 Nf2 Be3 3 Ne4 Kd3 or 2 Nb2 Bg7 is hopeless. But if White had no pawns in the latter case, he could have saved the game because of stalemate, 3 Ka2. This tactical idea can serve as an anchor, because White cannot avoid zugzwang anyway.

1…Bg5 (1…Bd2 2 g4 Bg5 3 g3) **2 g4 Bd2 3 g5! B×g5 4 g4**

After 4 g3? Bh6 5 g4 Bg5!⊙ 6 Ka1 Kc2, White is lost because he has failed to get rid of his own pawn in time.

4…Bh6 5 g5! B×g5 6 Ka1 Kc2 7 Nb2! Bf6 (7…c3 8 Na4=) **8 Ka2 B×b2** stalemate.

7/3. J. Kling, B. Horwitz, 1851

1 Nc3 Bb5!!

Only this subtle move, suggested by Chéron, saves Black. After 1…Be8? 2 Nd5⊙, he loses because of the unfortunate placement of his king in the corner. For example, 2…Bb5 3 Nb4 (△ 3 Nc6) 3…Be8 4 Nc6⊙, or 2…Ka7 3 Nb4⊙ Ka8 4 Nc6⊙.

2 Nd5 (2 N×b5 stalemate) **2…Ka7 3 Nb4 Be8!**⊙ **4 Nc6+ Ka6**=.

7/4. A. Kalinin, 1974*

The bishop is ready to hold the pawn from either diagonal. If it occupies the a3-f8 diagonal, then White must interfere by means of Ne7 before the black king can prevent this. From g7, the bishop can only be driven away by the knight from f5.

There is a single (and unusual) way to solve both these problems in time.

1 Ng2!! Bb4+

If 1…Bg7, then 2 Nh4!, and 3 Nf5 cannot be prevented. 1…Kg6 also loses: 2 Nh4+ Kg5 3 Nf5! Bb4+ 4 Nd6. Finally, 1…Bb2 2 Ke8 Ba3 transposes to the main line of the solution.

2 Ke8 Ba3

In case of 2…Kg7 3 Nf4 Kf6, Black loses the bishop: 4 Nd5+.

3 Nf4(e3) Kg7 4 Nd5+– (△ 5 Ne7).

7/5. A. Troitsky, 1924

1 Ba3! f5 2 d5!

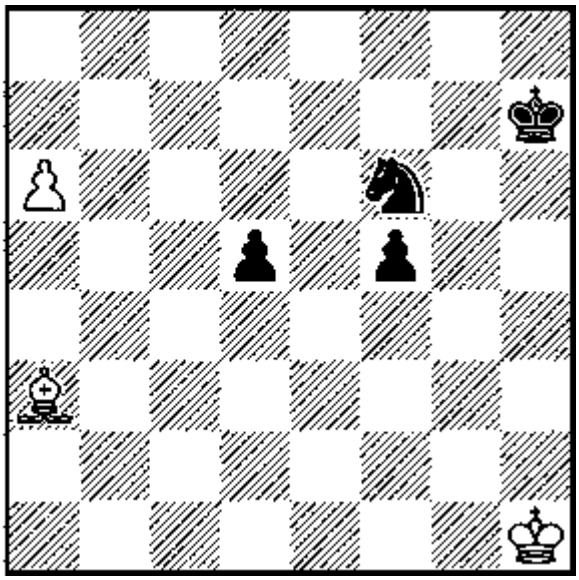
The black knight should not occupy the d5-square, as 2 a5? Nf6 3 a6 Nd5 only leads to a draw.

The initial moves cannot be transposed: 1 d5? cd 2 Ba3 d4! 3 Kg2 (3 a5 d3 4 Bb4 Ne7) 3…f5! 4

a5 Nf6 5 a6 Nd5=.

2…cd 3 a5 Nf6 4 a6

16-60



B

4…Ne8 (4…Nd7 5 Bc5! N×c5 6 a7+–) **5 Bd6! N×d6 6 a7**+–.

7/6. J. Marwitz, 1937

1 Bd3!!

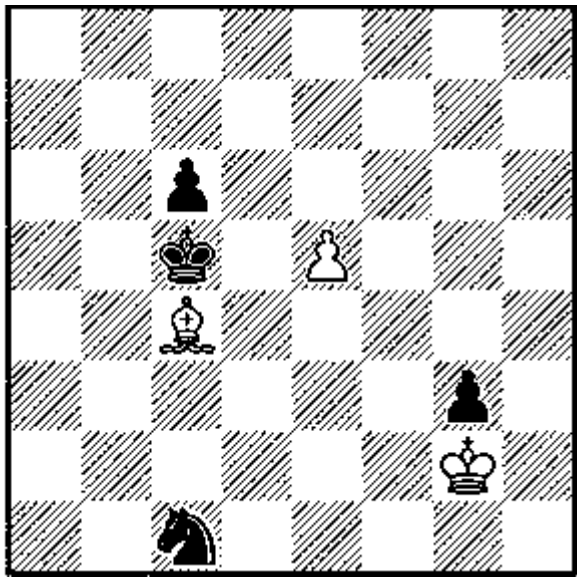
Both 2 e6 and 2 Bc4 are threatened. The premature attempt 1 e6? misses the win: 1…Ne2+ 2 Kf1 g2+! 3 B×g2 Ng3+ and 4…Nf5=.

1…Kb7 (1…N×d3 2 e6+–) **2 Bc4!**

The knight is corralled, but the fight is still not over yet.

2…Kb6 3 Kg2 Kc5

16-61



W?

4 K×g3!

After 4 e6? Kd6, the knight is released itself via d3 or e2 because the bishop is overworked between the two diagonals.

4…K×c4 5 e6 Ne2+ 6 Kh2!!+–

The knight fails to stop the pawn after this move, while after 6 Kg4? it could do so successfully: 6…Nc3 7 e7 Nd5 8 e8Q? (8 e8N= is relatively better) 8…Nf6+.

7/7. L. Katsnelson, L. Mitrofanov, 1977

The bishop clearly dominates the knight. White's hopes are based on the reduced material on the board and on the Réti idea that we have discussed in the chapter on pawn endgames.

1 Kc7!

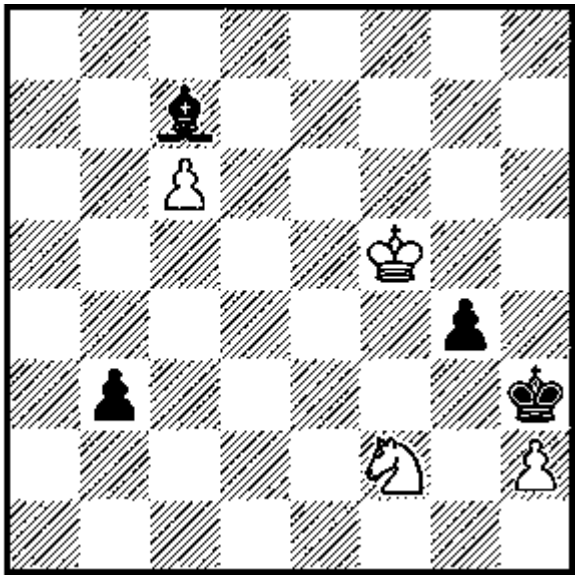
Both 1 c7? Bd6 2 Kb7 B×c7 3 K×c7 Kh3 and 1 Kb7? Bd6 2 Kb6 B×h2 (2…Kh3) 3 Kb5 Bc7 4 Kc4 g3 lose.

1…b2

An immediate draw results from 1…Bb4 2 Kb6 Bd6 3 Kb5 Kh3 (3…B×h2 4 Kc4) 4 Kc4 K×h2 5 K×b3 g3 6 Ne3=. The consequences of 1…Bc5!? are less obvious: 2 Kd7 Bb6 3 Ke6 Kh3 (3…Bc7 4 Kd5 △ Kc4=) 4 Kf5 (the king must move away from the b3-pawn because the threat 4…K×h2 has to be prevented) 4…Bc7 5 Nf2+ (a safer alternative is 5 Ke4! K×h2 6 Kd3 followed with 7 Ne3).

16-62

B

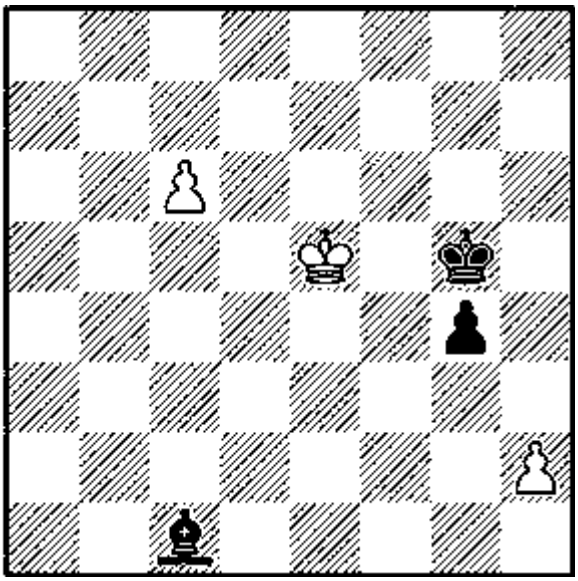


(a) 5…K×h2 6 N×g4+ Kg1 7 Ne5! b2 8 Nf3+ Kf2 9 Nd2 Ke2 10 Nb1=;
(b) 5…Kh4 6 Nd1! B×h2 7 Ke4! Bc7 8 Kd3 g3 9 Ne3 Kg5 10 Kc3=;
(c) 5…Kg2 6 Nd3! Kf3 7 Ne5+! Ke3 8 Nc4+ Kd4 9 Nb2 B×h2 10 K×g4=.

2 N×b2! (2 Nc3? Bb4–+) **2…B×b2 3 Kd6 Bc1 4 Ke5 Kg5** (the only way to stop the c-pawn)

16-63

W



5 Ke4 Bf4 6 h4+! gh 7 Kf3 Kf5 8 Kf2 Bh2 9 c7=.

7/8. Chekhover-Lasker, Moscow 1935

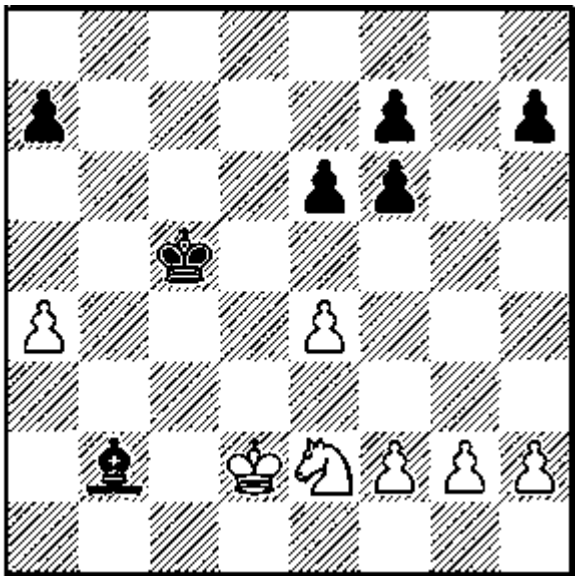
Black stands better (his bishop is obviously better than the knight) but he must play accurately. For example, after 1…Bb2? 2 a4 Kb6 3 Ke1 Ka5 4 Kd2 Kb4 5 Kc2, White manages to defend his queenside in time. In case of 1…Kc6?! 2 Ke1 b5 3 Kd2 Bb2, Black must take into account 4 b4! B×a3 5 Kc3 a5 (he has nothing else) 6 ba.

1…b5! 2 Ke1 Bb2! 3 a4 ba 4 ba Kc6

Black cannot eliminate the a4-pawn (4…Kb6 5 Kd2 Ka5? 6 Kc2 Be5 7 f4 Bd6 8 Kb3=), therefore the king goes to the center.

5 Kd2 Kc5

16-64



W

If **6 Kc2**, then **6…Bd4! 7 f3 Kc4! 8 N×d4 K×d4 9 Kb3 a5!**–+

The game continued 6 Nc3 Kb4 7 Nb5 a5

7…a6!? 8 Nd6 K×a4 9 N×f7 (9 Kc2 Be5) 9…Kb3 was probably more precise. As Müller indicates, White could have answered the text with

8 Kd3! because 8…K×a4 9 Kc4 traps the king on the edge of the board, making it extremely difficult for his opponent to make the most of his advantage. 8 Nd6 K×a4 9 Kc2 Be5 10 N×f7 B×h2 11 Nd8 e5 12 Nc6 Bg1 13 f3 Bc5 14 Nb8 Kb5 15 g4 Be7 16 g5 fg 17 Nd7 Bd6 18 Nf6 Kc4!. White resigned in view of 19 N×h7 Be7.

7/9. Korchnoi-Polugaevsky, Buenos Aires cmsf (13) 1980

After 1 gf B×f5, 2 Nd4 loses to 2…Bb1, while 2 e4 de 3 Ne3 Be6 leaves Black with an obvious advantage. 1 Kg3 fg 2 fg Kf6 3 Nd4 Ke5 (or 3…Be8) is also favorable for Black. Korchnoi finds the best defensive possibility.

1 f4!! fg

After 1…gf?! 2 g5! fe+ 3 K×e3, White, in spite of being a pawn down, seizes the initiative due to his dangerous g5-pawn and the black central pawns that are blocked on squares of their bishop's color.

2 fg

The position is roughly even; the g5-pawn offers White enough counterplay. If 2…Bf5 3 Nd4 Bb1, then 4 Kg3 (rather than 4 Nc6+ Kd6 5 N×a5? Kc7, winning the knight) 4…B×a2 5 Nc6+ Kd6 6 N×a5 Bb1 (4…Kc7? is bad in view of 7 e4! de 8 g6+–) 7 Nb7+.

The remainder of the game was: 2…Ke6 3 Nd4+ Ke5 4 Kg3 Be8 5 K×g4 Ke4 6 Kg3! K×e3 7 Nf5+ Kd2 8 Kf4 Kc3 9 Ke5 d4 10 N×d4 Kb2 11 Ne6! K×a2 12 Nc5 (we know this technique of protecting a pawn with a knight) 12…Kb2 13 Kf6 Kc3 14 g6 B×g6 15 K×g6 a4! 16 ba Kc4 17 Ne4 b3 18 Nd2+ Kb4 19 N×b3 K×a4 Draw.

7/10. Spassky-Botvinnik, USSR ch tt, Moscow 1966

What can White do against a march of the black king to the a2-pawn? Botvinnik indicated the correct defensive plan: White should hold the enemy king on the edge by posting his own king on c2, while the knight must block the passed pawn from e2.

1 Nf1! Kc3 2 Ng3 e3 3 Kd1 Kb2 4 Ne2 K×a2 5 Kc2, and White has built an indestructible fortress.

Instead of 1…Kc3, Black has a more poisonous possibility: 1…Bc7!?, creating difficulties for a knight march to e2. But White manages to hold in this case, too: 2 Ne3 Bf4 3 Ng4 (3 Nc4?! Kc5)

3…Bg5 (3…Kc3 4 Nf6 Kb2 5 Nd5! Bd6 6 Kd1 K×a2 7 Kc2 Ka3 8 Ne3 Bf4 9 Nf5 e3 10 Nd4=) 4 Nf2 Ke5 5 Ng4+ Kf5 6 Nf2 Bc1 7 Nh3 Bb2 8 Ke3! Ke5 9 Ke2 Bd4 10 Ng5 Kf5 11 Nf7 (analysis by Averbakh).

In the game, however, 1 Nc4? was played. Here the knight is placed too far from e2, thus the defensive plan that we have discussed does not work, and no other plan exists.

1…Kc3 2 Kd1 Bd4 (△ 3…Kd3) 3 Ke2 e3 4 Na5 (the pawn ending after 4 N×e3 B×e3 is lost) 4…Kb2 5 Nc6 Bc5 6 Ne5 K×a2 7 Nd3 Be7 White resigned.

7/11. S. Kozlowski, 1931

1 Nd7+! Kc7 2 Nf8!

The only way to imprison the bishop.

2…Kd8

2…Kd6 3 Kg4! Kd5 4 Kh5! (detour around the mined g5-square) 4…Ke5 5 Kg5⊙ Ke4 6 Kh6+–;

2…Kc8 3 Kf4 Kd8 4 Kg5 Ke8 5 Kh5!+–.

3 Kf4 Ke8 4 Kg5 K×f8 5 Kh6⊙+–

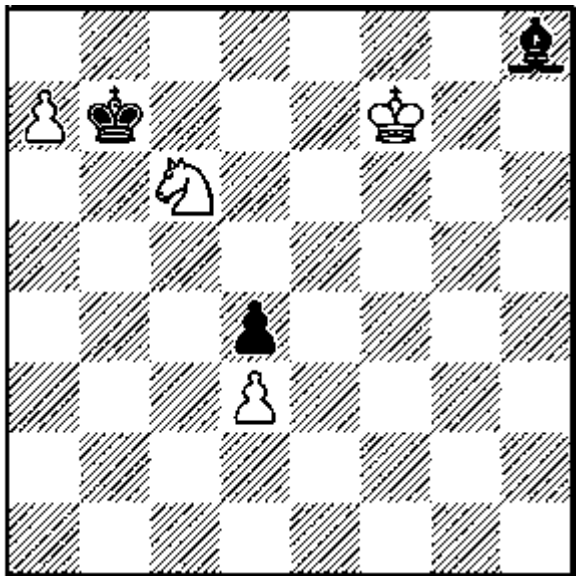
An amazing position: Black is lost in spite of his extra bishop!

7/12. M. Liburkin, 1947

1 Nc6+ Kb7!

After 1…Ka8 2 ba Kb7 3 Nd8+ K×a7 4 Nf7+–, White's task would have been simpler.

2 ba Ka8 3 Kf7! Kb7



4 a8Q+!! K×a8 5 Kg6⊙ Kb7 6 Nd8+ Kb6 7 Nf7 Kb5 8 N×h8+–.

7/13. Gerusel-Kestler, BRD ch, Mannheim 1975

1…b5!–+

Otherwise White plays 2 a4 and eventually a4-a5. After the technically perfect solution in the game, he is devoid of any counterchances.

2 Kg3 Kf5 3 Bd2 Nf6 4 Bc1 Nh5+ 5 Kh4 Nf4 6 Bd2 g5+ 7 Kg3 Ne2+ 8 Kf2 N×d4, and Black won.

7/14. Popa-Galic, Bucharest 1938

White would have gladly brought his knight to e6, but there is no way to get to that square. If he attacks the c7-pawn, the bishop will protect it. Black is not afraid of zugzwang because he has two squares for his king: f6 and g6.

White cannot do without a king transfer to the queenside. The black king can only reach c8; White places his king on a8 and drives Black away with a knight check from a7.

1 Kd3! Kf7 2 Kc4 Ke8 3 Kb5 Kd8 4 Ka6 Kc8 5 Ka7! Bf6 6 Ne4 Be7 7 Ka8! Bd8 8 Nc3 Bf6

9 Nb5+–

The remainder of the game was 9…e4 10 fe Be5 11 Na7+ Kd8 12 Kb7 Bc3 13 Nb5 Ba5 14 N×d6 (the simple 14 Nd4 △ Ne6+ was good enough, too) 14…cd 15 e5 Bc7 16 e6 Ba5 17 e7+ K×e7 18 c7 B×c7 19 K×c7 Black resigned.

7/15. Botvinnik-Eliskases, Moscow 1936

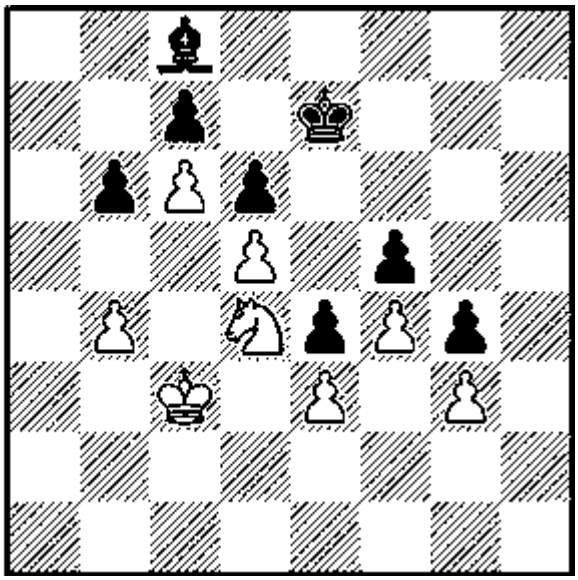
Generally, it is useful to press Black even more by advancing the pawn to c6. However the immediate 1 c6? was met with 1…Bd3 2 Kc3 b5!, and White had to accept the draw because the line 3 Nd4 Bc4 4 Ne6 B×d5 5 N×c7? (5 Nd4=) 5…B×c6 is senseless.

After the game, Botvinnik found the correct solution: the advance c5-c6 should have been prepared by means of **1 Kc3!**

(a) 1…Bd3 2 Nd4 bc (2…b5 3 Ne6+–) 3 bc dc 4 Nb3 c4. The pawn ending that results after 5 Na5 Bf1 6 N×c4? B×c4 7 K×c4 Ke7⊙ is drawn (the corresponding squares are c5-d7, d4-d6, c4-e7; the correspondence is favorable for Black now, and White cannot cede the move to him). However 5 Nd4! Bf1 6 Nb5 Ke7 7 N×c7 Kd6 8 Nb5+ K×d5 9 Nd4 wins.

(b) **1…Bb7 2 c6 Bc8** (2…Ba6 3 Nd4 △ Ne6) **3 Nd4 Ke7**

16-66



W?

A try for zugzwang seems attractive now: 4 Nb5 Kd8 5 Na7. Black responds with 5…Ba6! 6 b5 Bc8 7 Kd4⊙ Ke7 8 N×c8+ Kd8 9 Na7 Ke7=, and it suddenly becomes clear that Black has built a fortress, so the extra knight cannot be utilized.

4 Kb3!

Planning a king transfer to b5 followed by a knight sacrifice on b6. Another winning method was suggested by Inarkiev: 4 b5! Kd8 5 Nc2 Ke8 6 Nb4 Ke7 7 Na6 Kd8 8 Kc4 and Black is in zugzwang.

4…Kd8 5 Ka4 Ke7 6 Kb5+– △ Nc2-a3-c4xb6.

Chapter Eight

8/1. A. Troitsky, 1912

1 de Rc1+ 2 Kf2!

In case of 2 Kg2? R×h1 3 K×h1 Kc6, the knight is unable to protect the e-pawn.

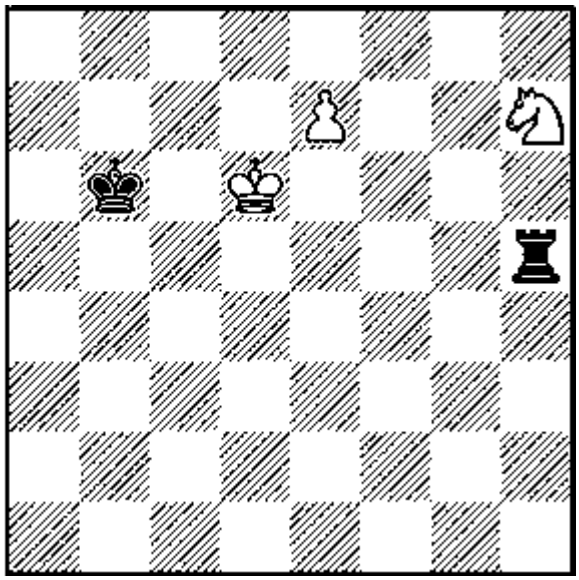
2…R×h1 3 e7 Rh2+ 4 Kf3

4 Ke3? is wrong in view of 4…Rh5!=. First of all, White should eliminate the f6-pawn.

4…Rh3+ 5 Kf4 Rh4+ 6 Kf5 Rh5+ 7 K×f6 Rh6+ 8 Kf5!

Rather than 8 Ke5? Rh1 9 Nf6 Rh8 10 Nd7+ Kc7 11 Nf8 Rh1=.

8…Rh5+ 9 Kf4 Rh4+ 10 Kf3 Rh3+ 11 Ke2 Rh2+ 12 Kd3 Rh3+ 13 Kd4 Rh4+ 14 Kd5 Rh5+ 15 Kd6



15…Rh6+

If 15…Rh1, then 16 Nf6 Re1 17 Nd7+ and 18 Ne5+–.

16 Nf6! R×f6+

16…Rh8 17 Nd7+ and 18 Nf8+–.

17 Kd5 Rf5+ 18 Kd4 Rf4+ 19 Kd3 Rf3+ 20 Ke2+– The king had to take two tours – up- and downstairs!

8/2. J. Moravec, 1913

1 Kh7!!

In case of 1 K×g7? h4 2 Kg6 h3 3 Kg5 h2 4 Kg4 h1Q, White is forced to play 5 Ra1+ (5 Kg3?? Qh8). Therefore the g7-pawn should be left alone.

1…h4

After 1…g5!? 2 Kg6 g4, the primitive 3 K×h5? g3 4 Kg4 g2 5 Kh3 Kh1! leads only to a draw. In order to avoid stalemate, the h5-pawn should not be captured: 3 Kg5!!.

2 Kg6 h3 3 Kg5 h2 4 Kg4 h1Q

4…g5!? 5 Kg3 h1N+ 6 Kf3 g4+ 7 K×g4 Nf2+ 8 Kf3 does not help because the knight will be caught soon (see diagram 8-5).

5 Kg3+–.

8/3. P. Benko, 1980

The line 1 Kc3? a1Q+ 2 Kb3 Qa8!–+ is clearly unacceptable. By analogy with the previous exercise, 1 d5 ed 2 Kc3 (2…a1Q+? 3 Kb3+–) seems attractive, inasmuch as after 2…a1N? 3 Rh4, the knight is lost: 3…Ka2 4 Rd4 Ka3 5 R×d5 Nb3 6 Rb5+–. But Black manages to hold after 2…d4+! 3 Kb3 a1N+!.

The winning method is known from pawn endgame theory – a “half-stalemate.”

1 Rh1+ Kb2 2 Ra1! K×a1 3 Kc2! e5 4 d5 e4 5 d6 e3 6 d7 e2 7 d8Q e1N+ (7…e1Q 8 Qd4+) **8**

Kb3 (8 Kc3 Nd3 9 Qb6) **8…Nd3 9 Qd4+!**.

8/4. V. Sokov, 1940

The routine 1 Ke7? misses a win in view of 1…Kb4! 2 Re1 (otherwise 2…Kc3) 2…a5 3 Kd6 a4, and the black king applies a shouldering to the white opponent. The move …Kb4! should be prevented.

1 Rb1!! Ka2

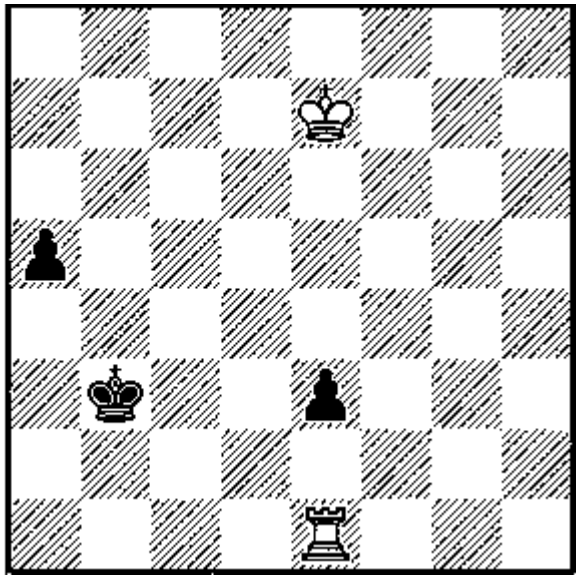
1…a5 2 Ke7 a4 3 Kd6 Ka2 4 Re1 a3 5 Kc5 Kb2, and here both 6 Re2+ Kb1 (6…Kb3 7 R×e3+) 7 Kb4 a2 8 Kb3+– and 6 Kb4 a2 7 Re2+ Kc1 8 R×a2 Kd1 9 Kc3+– are strong.

2 Re1! a5 3 Ke7 Kb3

We know already what happens after 3…a4 4 Kd6.

16-68

W?



4 Kd6!

Rather than 4 R×e3+? Kb4 5 Kd6 a4 6 Re4+ Kb5! with a draw (shouldering again!).

4…a4

4…Kb4 5 Kd5 a4 6 Kd4 a3 7 Rb1+.

5 Kc5 a3 6 R×e3+ Ka4

6…Kb2 7 Kb4 a2 8 Re2+ Kb1 9 Kb3+–.

7 Kc4 a2 8 Re1 Ka3 9 Kc3+–.

8/5. Y. Averbakh, 1980

1 Ke6! e4 2 Rg5!!+–

Only this move wins. White places his rook behind the passed pawn with tempo and, after Black moves his king out of the way, the white king outflanks it from the opposite side.

2…Kd2(d3) 3 Rd5+! Kc2 4 Re5! Kd3 5 Kf5!;

2…Kf2(f3) 3 Rf5+! Kg2 4 Re5! Kf3 5 Kd5!;

2…Ke2 3 Ke5 e3 4 Ke4.

The premature 1 Rg5? only leads to a draw after 1…Kf4! 2 Kf6 e4. 1 Kd6? is also incorrect: 1…e4 2 Rg5 Kd3(d2)!, as well as 1 Kf6? e4 2 Rg5 Kf3(f2)!, because the outflanking technique cannot be applied.

8/6. N. Kopaev, 1954

Being well-armed with the experience of previous examples, we can find White's initial move, perhaps almost automatically.

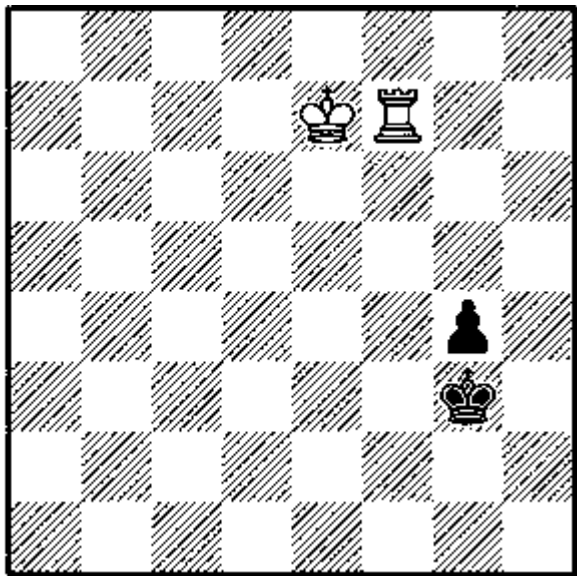
1 Rf7+! Kg3!?

If 1…Ke3, then 2 Rg7! Kf4 3 Kf7 g4 4 Kg6! g3 5 Kh5+–.

2 Ke7 g4

16-69

W?



3 Ke6!

3 Kf6? is bad in view of 3…Kf4!! (shouldering) 4 Kg6+ Ke3!=.

3…Kh2 4 Kf5

4 Ke5 is also playable, while the check 4 Rh7+?! is premature in view of 4…Kg2 5 Kf5? (the only winning method is 5 Rf7!! g3 6 Ke5 here) 5…Kf3! 6 Ra7 g3 7 Ra3+ Kf2 8 Kf4 g2=.

4…g3 5 Kg4 (5 Rh7+ and 5 Kf4 are equivalent) **5…g2 6 Rh7+ Kg1 7 Kg3 Kf1 8 Rf7+ Kg1 9 Rf8**

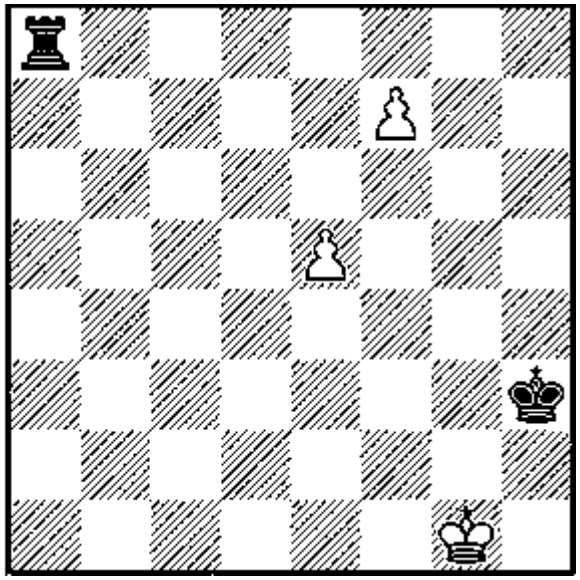
Almost every move is good here, for example 9 Ra8 or 9 Rg7, but by no means 9 Rf2?? Kh1! and stalemate saves Black.

9…Kh1 10 Rh8+ Kg1 11 Rh2+–.

8/7. P. Rossi, 1961

1 Rh6+ Kg3 2 Rg6+ Kh3 3 Rg1! hgQ+ 4 K×g1 Ra8 (4…Kg3 5 f8Q Ra1+ 6 Qf1+–)

16-70



5 Kf2!

The incautious 5 e6? would have allowed Black to draw by means of attacking the white king, pressed to the edge of the board: 5…Kg3 6 Kf1 Kf3 7 Ke1 Ke3 8 Kd1 Kd3 9 Kc1 Kc3 10 Kb1 Rb8+.

5…Rf8 6 e6 Kg4 7 Ke3+– △ 8 e7.

8/8. Bowden-Duncan,

Britain ch tt 1996/97

The remainder of the game was 1 Rf7+? Kg2 2 K×e4 g3 3 Rh7 (if 3 Kf4, Black's reply is the

same) 3…Kh2!, and White resigned.

White had to make a waiting move.

1 Rh8! e3 (it will soon be obvious that the same consequences result from 1…Kg2 2 K×e4 g3 3 Ke3) **2 Rf8+ Kg2**

In case of 2…Ke2, White has a draw only after 3 Rh8! Kd2 4 Ra8! or 3…Kf2 4 Rf8+ Kg1 5 K×e3 h2 6 Ra8! (6 Rh8? g3) 6…g3 (6…h1Q 7 Ra1+ Kg2 8 R×h1 K×h1 9 Kf4=) 7 Ra1+ Kg2 8 Kf4=.

3 K×e3 g3

As may be seen, White has gained a tempo rather than lost it, because his king is placed better on e3 than on e4.

4 Rh8! Kh2 (4…h2 5 Kf4=) **5 Rg8! g2 6 Kf2**=.

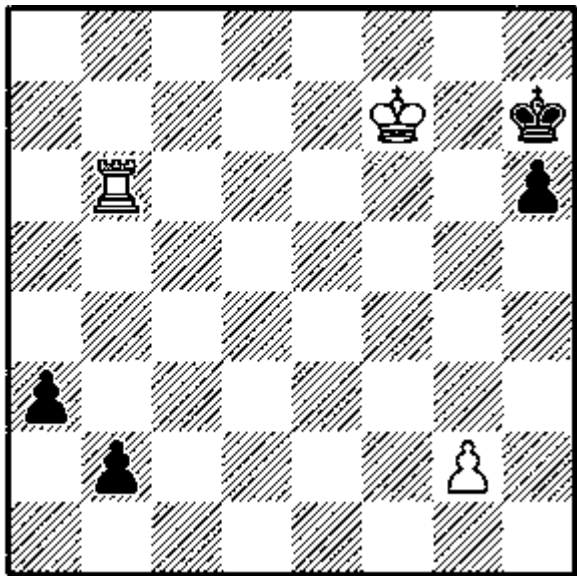
8/9. L. Mitrofanov, B. Lurye, 1983

Black's pawns are advanced far enough, but his king is badly placed, so White has at least a draw. The question is whether he can win.

1 Rg3+ Kh8!

In case of 1…Kh7, the solution is simple: 2 Kf6! b2 (2…Kh8 3 Rg7) 3 Rg7+ Kh8 4 Rb7 a3 5 Kg6+–.

2 Rg6!! b2 3 Rb6 a3 4 Kf7 Kh7



5 g4!! a2 6 g5! hg 7 R×b2 a1Q 8 Rh2#.

8/10. R. Réti, 1929

The rook should attack a kingside pawn, but which one?

In case of 1 Rf8? f3 2 Rf4 b4 3 R×g4 b3 4 Rg1 f2 5 Rf1 b2, the black pawns are too close to each other, therefore White loses: 6 Kg7 Kd4 7 Kf6 Kd3–+.

1 Rg8! g3 2 Rg4 b4 3 R×f4 b3 4 Rf1 g2 5 Rg1 b2 6 Kg7 Kd4 7 Kf6 Ke3 8 Rb1! Kd3 9 Rg1!=.

8/11. V. Chekhover, 1949

Certainly one of the pawns will be promoted. 1 Ke6? Ke2 2 Rg2 Ke3 (2…h4) 3 R×f2 K×f2 4 Kf5 Kg3 is hopeless. So what is to be done?

1 Kg8!! h4 2 Rh7 h3 3 R×h3 Kg2 4 Rh7! f1Q 5 Rg7+, and the black king cannot escape from checks.

8/12. J. Ullmann, 1928*

The same problem that we had in the previous exercise. Both 1 R×a3? Kb2 and 1 Ke3? Kd1 2 Rd7+ Ke1 3 Rc7 a2 lose at once.

1 Kf3!! Kd2 2 Rd7+ Kc3

2…Ke1 is useless in view of 3 Re7+ Kf1 4 Rh7.

3 Rc7+ Kb3 4 Ke2(e3) (4 Rb7+? Ka4 5 Rc7 a2–+) **4…a2 5 Kd3! Kb4**

5…a1Q 6 Rb7+ Ka3 7 Ra7+ Kb2 8 R×a1=.

6 Rb7+ Kc5 7 Ra7! Kb6 (7…c1Q 8 Rc7+) **8 K×c2! K×a7 9 Kb2**=.

8/13. R. Réti, 1928

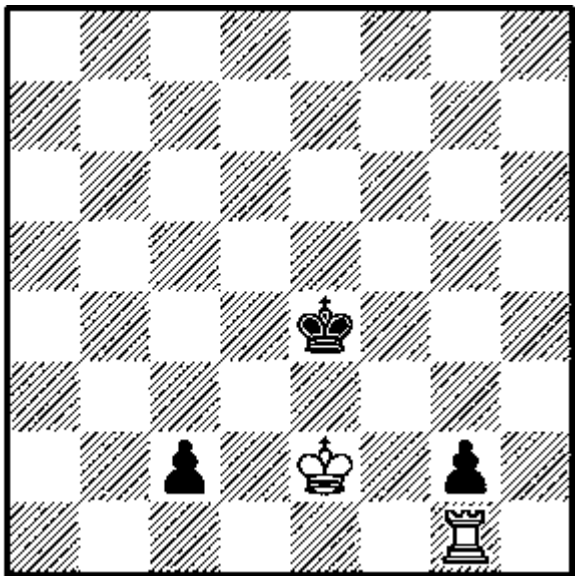
1 Kf2!

The standard method 1 K×g2? Ke4 2 Kf2 lets Black survive after 2…e1Q+!! (2…Kd3? 3 Ke1⊙ +–) 3 K×e1 Kd3⊙ 4 Ra1 Kc3 (△ Kb2) 5 Rc1 Kd3.

1…Ke4 2 K×e2 Kd4 3 Rg1! Ke4 (3…Kc3 4 Ke3+–)

16-72

W?



4 Re1! Kd4 (4…Kf4 5 Kf2+–) **5 Kd2**+–.

Chapter Nine

9/1. N. Kopaev, 1953⊙

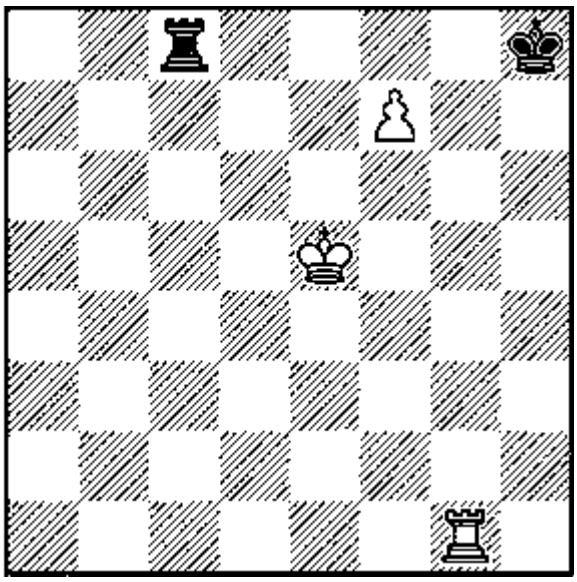
The unlucky placement of the king does Black in (with the king on h7 it would have been a draw); in addition, his rook is too close to the f-pawn. But it is by no means easy for White to exploit these disadvantages.

1 Kf6! Rc6+ 2 Ke5 Rc8

If 2…Rc5+, then 3 Kd6 Rc8 4 Re1! Kg7 5 Re8+–. With a rook on b8, the saving check 5…Rb6+ exists.

16-73

W?



3 Rg6!! Kh7 4 Rc6! Ra8 5 Kf6

The rook protects the king from side checks. Black is helpless against the maneuver Re6-e8.

9/2. N. Kopaev, 1958

1…Kf6!

Black should take measures against strengthening White's position after Ke8 and e6-e7. If 2 e7+ now, then 2…Kf7=.

1…Rb1? loses to 2 e7 Rb7+ 3 Ke6 Rb8 4 Rd6 and 5 Rd8+–.

2 Rc6 Re2 (2…Rd1+? 3 Ke8) **3 Rd6 Re1 4 Rd2** (△ 5 Rf2+) **4…Ra1!**

Only now, when the white rook has abandoned both the a-file and the sixth rank, does Black undertake the side attack.

5 Rf2+ Kg7 6 e7 Ra7+ with a draw.

9/3. Hector-Krasenkov, Ostende 1990

Black would have gladly abandoned the corner with his king but 1…Kh7? loses by force: 2 Kf8+ Kh6 3 Re6+! Kh7 (3…Kg5 4 f6 Kf5 5 Rb6 Ra8+ 6 Kg7+–) 4 f6+–.

So he should follow a waiting policy.

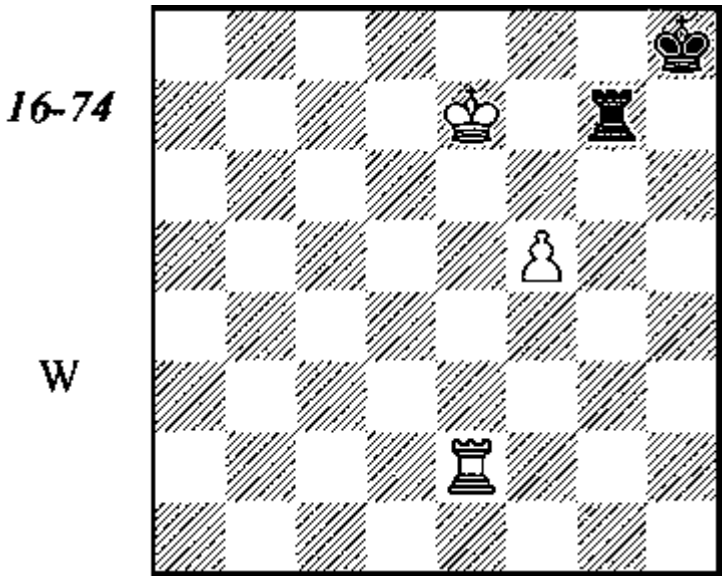
1…Ra1! 2 Re2!

The game continued 2 f6?! Kh7! with a drawn position we already know (3 Kf8+ Kg6 4 f7 Kf6! 5 Kg8 Rg1+). White could have set his opponent much more difficult problems.

2…Ra7+ 3 Kg6 Rg7+ (a passive defense 3…Ra8 loses) **4 Kf6 Rg1**

The rook dares not to come back to the long side: 4…Ra7?? 5 Re8+ Kh7 6 Re7+.

5 Ke7 Rg7+



6 Ke8 Ra7! 7 Kf8

If 7 f6, then 7…Kg8! (7…Ra8+? 8 Kf7 Ra7+ 9 Kg6+–) 8 Rg2+ Kh7 9 f7 Ra8+, and the checks from the long side save Black.

7…Ra8+ 8 Kf7 Ra7+ 9 Re7 Ra1

The initial position has arisen again.

10 Re2 Ra7+ 11 Kg6 Rg7+ 12 Kf6 Rg1 13 Ke7 Rg7+

Having returned to the diagrammed position, White tries another possibility.

14 Kd6!? Rf7!

This subtle defense saves the game. After 14…Ra7? 15 Re8+ Kh7 16 Re7+ or 14…Rg1? 15 f6 Kg8 16 Ke7, Black was lost.

15 Re8+ (15 Ke6 Ra7=) **15…Kg7 16 Re7 Kf6**=.

9/4. Vukic-Müller, Varna 1975

Black holds by means of transferring his king to the short side.

1…Kf8! 2 Rb6 (2 K×f6 Ra6+; 2 Rb8+ Ke7 △ …Rg4+) **2…Rf4!**

2…Rg4+!? 3 K×f6 Kg8 4 Rb8+ Kh7 is less accurate but still playable. If we shift this position by one file to the left, White would have won. Here, however, Black holds because of the fact that he has two files (a- and b-) for his rook to stay far away from the white king. The white rook occupies one of them, but Black can use the remaining one: 5 Ke6 Re4+ 6 Kf7 Ra4=.

3 K×f6 (3 R×f6+ Kg8 4 Ra6 Rg4+) **3…Kg8 4 Rb8+ Kh7 5 Ke6** (5 Rf8 Ra4) **5…Kg7**=

Black chose the incorrect continuation 1…Ra6? 2 Kg7!+–. The f-pawn will be lost anyway and the king will forever remain on the long side where it only obstructs his own rook. The remainder was 2…Rc6 3 Rb8+ Ke7 4 Rb1 Ra6 5 Re1+ Kd8 6 Kf7 Kd7 7 Rd1+ Kc7 8 Ke7 Black resigned.

9/5. Rohde-Cramling, Innsbruck wch jr 1977

This position was deeply analyzed by Kopaev in 1955. White wins, although with some hard work. When playing it, one should beware of slipping into theoretically drawn endings. Rohde was probably ill- prepared theoretically and failed to avoid an error.

1 Ke6! (of course not 1 Kf6? Re1!=) **1…Kf8** (1…Kd8? 2 Rh8+ Kc7 3 Ke7+–) **2 Rf7+!**

An important zwischenschach to impair Black's king position. Both 2 Ra7? Re1! and 2 Rh8+? Kg7 3 Ra8 Re1! draw immediately.

2…Kg8

2…Ke8 3 Ra7 Kf8 4 Ra8+ Kg7 5 Ke7 Rb1 6 e6 is hopeless for Black. When we were discussing diagram 9-8, we stated that the white rook is ideally placed on a8. This is the position White wants in this ending, and he can achieve it – provided that he plays correctly.

3 Rd7!

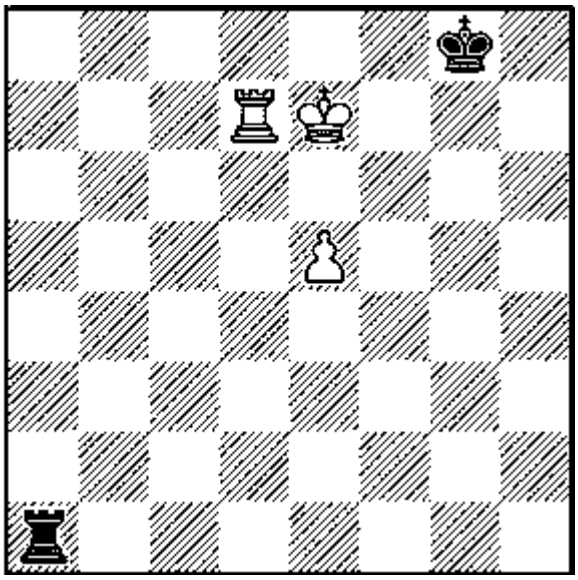
Rather than 3 Ra7? Re1! (3…Kf8? 4 Ra8+ Kg7 5 Ke7+–) 4 Kf6 (4 Kd6 Kf8!) 4…Rf1+ 5 Ke6 (unfortunately there is no 5 Ke7?? Rf7+ – this is why the white rook should be placed near the king) 5…Re1=.

The move 3 Rc7?! is much less precise, however it does not miss the win after 3…Re1 4 Kf6! Rf1+ 5 Ke7 Ra1 6 Rc2 Ra7+ 7 Kf6 Rf7+ 8 Ke6 Ra7 9 Rd2!.

3…Re1 4 Kf6! Rf1+ 5 Ke7! (the drawbacks of the disadvantageous position of the black king on g8 tell for the first, but not for the last time in this ending) **5…Ra1!**

The occupation of the long side is the most stubborn defensive method. White's task would have been much easier after 5…Rf7+ 6 Kd6 Rf8 (6…Rf1 7 e6 Rd1+ 8 Ke7 Ra1 9 Rd2+–) 7 e6 Ra8 8 Ke5! (8 Ke7? Kg7=) 8…Kf8 9 Kf6+–.

16-75



W?

The game continued 6 e6? Kg7 (see diagram 9-7, the line 2…Ra1) 7 Rd6 (△ Ke8+–) 7…Ra8! with a drawn position.

6 Rd2! Ra7+ (the threat was 7 Rg2+) **7 Kf6 Rf7+** (forced) **8 Ke6 Rf1**

Unfortunately for Black, the rook must leave the long side because 8…Ra7 9 Rd8+ Kg7 10 Rd7+ is bad. White immediately occupies the a-file.

9 Ra2! Kg7 (9…Re1 10 Kf6! Rf1+ 11 Ke7 Rf7+ 12 Kd6+–; 9…Kf8 10 Ra8+ Kg7 11 Kd6+–) **10 Ra7+**

It is still not too late for a mistake: 10 Ke7? Rf7+ 11 Kd6 Rb7 12 e6 Rb6+ 13 Kd7 Rb7+ 14 Kc6 Rb1 15 Rf2 Ra1!=, or 12 Ra6 Kf7= (12…Rb8=).

10…Kg6 (10…Kf8 11 Ra8+ Kg7 12 Kd6) **11 Ra8 Kg7 12 Ke7** (12 Kd6 is equivalent) **12…Rf7+** (12…Rb1 13 e6 Rb7+ 14.Kd6) **13 Kd6 Rb7 14 e6 Rb6+ 15 Kd7 Rb7+ 16 Kc6 Re7 17 Kd6**+–.

9/6. Arencibia-Vladimirov, Leon 1991

The game continued 1 Rc5? Kb4 2 Rc1 c5 3 Rb1+ Ka3 4 Rc1 Rd5, and White resigned. The reason for the defeat is the same as in the Kochiev-Smyslov and the Tal-I. Zaitsev endings: the poor position of the king on e2.

Another inaccurate possibility is 1 Ra6?, expecting 1…Kb4? 2 Ke3! Kb5 3 Ra1=. But Black plays 1…Kc3!, putting White into zugzwang. In case of 2 Ke3 Re6+, the white king is driven one more file farther from the pawn. After 2 Ke1 Kb4 3 Ke2 Kb5 4 Ra1 c5, the king fails to leave the second rank in time. All that remains is 2 Rb6, but then 2…Rd2+ 3 Ke3 c5–+ follows. If the rook were on a6, a check from a3 would have saved the game.

1 Ke3! Kb4 2 Ra1 c5 3 Rb1+ Ka3 4 Rc1=, and if 4…Rd5, then 5 Ke4.

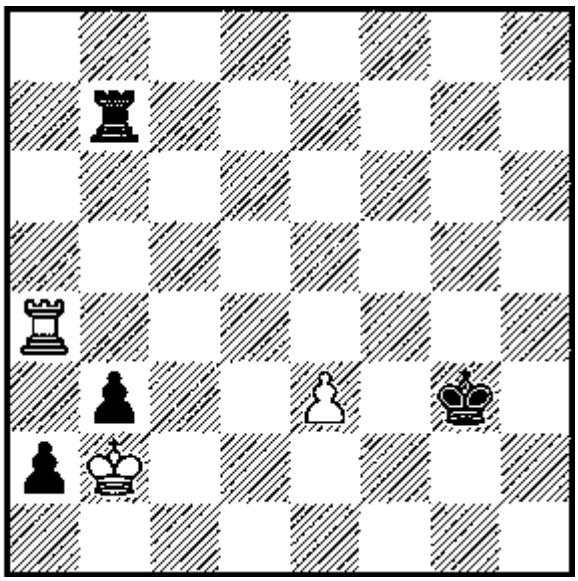
9/7. Spiridonov-Shamkovich, Polanica-Zdroj 1970

The natural looking 1 Rb6? meets a brilliant refutation: 1…Rf4!! 2 ef a2 3 Kf3 Kh5 4 Ra6 b3–+. The line 1 Kd2? Rf2+ 2 Kc1 a2 is hopeless; the same may be said about 1Kd3? Rf2 2 Kc4 Rb2 (“selfpropelled pawns”) 3 e4 a2 4 e5 Kg5. Finally, if 1 e4?, the simplest is 1…Rb7 2 Kd2 b3 3 Kc1 b2+ 4 Kb1 Rb3 △ 5…Rc3–+. Only one possibility remains:

1 Ra4! Rb7 2 Kd3(d2) Kg3 3 Kc2 (△ 4 Kb3=) **3…b3+ 4 Kb1 a2+ 5 Kb2=**

16-76

B



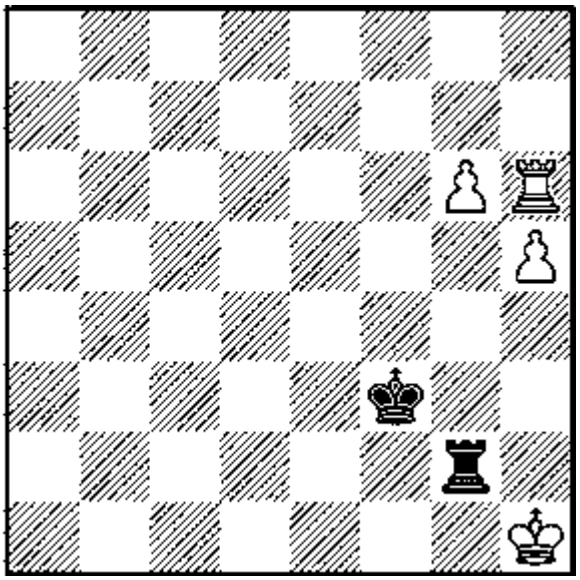
This is a theoretical draw (even without the e3-pawn) – as we know from our analysis of Kasparian’s position.

9/8. G. Kasparian, 1948

In case of 1…Ke6? 2 h4 Kf6 3 h5 Kg7 4 Rh7+ Kg8 (see diagram 9-56) 5 Ka2!!, White wins. Black must redirect his king to the opposite wing in order to utilize the unfavorable position of the white king on the edge.

The tempting 1…Rg2?! 2 h4 Kc4 is also losing after 3 Kb1! Kb3 4 Kc1 Kc3 5 Kd1 Kd3 6 Ke1 Ke3 7 Kf1 Rf2+ 8 Kg1 Kf3 9 h5 Rg2+ 10 Kh1! (10 Kf1 Rh2).

16-77

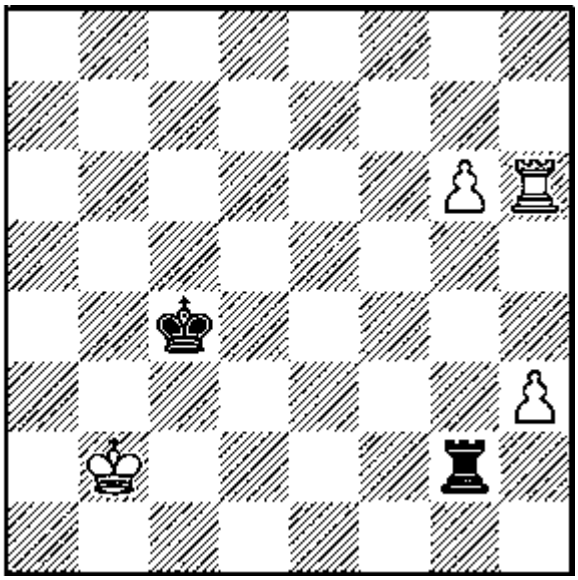


B

For example, 10…Kf2 11 Rh7 Kg3 12 Rf7! (rather than 12 g7? Kf2 △ 13…Rg4) 12…Rh2+ (12…Ra2 13 Kg1 Ra1+ 14 Rf1 Ra2 15 Rb1+–) 13 Kg1 R×h5 14 g7 Rg5 15 Rf2! Kh3+ 16 Kh1+–. If 10…Rg4, then White does not play 11 Rh7?! Rg5! and he is in zugzwang: 12 g7? (12 Rh6) 12…Rg4 13 Kh2 Rg2+ with perpetual check, but 11 Rh8! Rg5 (11…Kf2 12 Rf8+) 12 Rh7! instead, and it is Black who is in zugzwang: 12…Rg4 13 Rf7+ winning (analysis by Leitao and P. H. Nielsen).

1…Kc4! (△ 2…Kb3) **2 Kb2 Rg2+**

16-78



W

3 Ka3

3 Kc1 Kc3 4 Kd1 Kd3 5 Ke1 Ke3 6 Kf1 Kf3 7 h4 Rh2 8 Kg1 Rg2+ (9…Ra2 10 h5 Ra1+ 11 Ka2 Ra2+ 12 Kh3 Ra1=) 9 Kh1 Kf2= (9…Rg4=).

3…Rg3+ 4 Ka4 Rg1 5 Ka5

5 Rh4+ Kd5 6 Rg4 R×g4+ 7 hg Ke6=.

5…Kc5 6 Ka6 Kc6 7 Ka7 Kc7 8 Ka6 (8 Rh7+ Kd6 9 Rb7 Ke6=) **8…Kc6**=.

9/9. Beliavsky-Azmaiparashvili, Portoroz 1997

Of the six possible king retreats, only one is correct, but which one?

1…Kd4? is quite bad: 2 Rf1 followed by 3 K×h3. Or 1…Kf4(f3)? 2 Ra1 Ra6 3 f6 (the f-pawn cannot be captured because, after the rook exchange, the king is beyond the square of the a5-pawn).

The game continued 1…Kd2? 2 Re5 Kd3 hoping for 3 K×h3? Kd4 4 Rb5 Kc4=. However, Beliavsky responded with 3 a6! R×a6 4 K×h3, and Black was lost: the king is on the long side, and can be cut off from the pawn not only vertically, but horizontally as well. The remainder was

4…Kd4 (4…Ra4 5 Kg3) 5 Re6 Ra8 6 Kg4 Rg8+ 7 Kf4 Kd5 8 Ra6 (8 Re1 was also good here – a frontal attack does not help because the pawn has crossed the middle line) 8…Rg1 9 f6 Rf1+ 10 Kg5 Ke5 11 Kg6 Rg1+ 12 Kf7 Rb1 13 Kg7 Rg1+ 14 Kf8 Kf5 15 f7 Re1 16 Kg7 Rg1+ 17 Kh7 Black resigned.

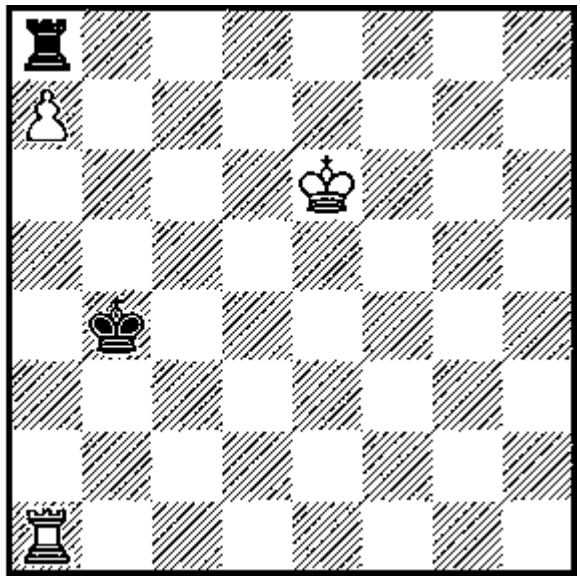
Let's look at 1…Kf2?. Here 2 Re5? is no longer good, because after 2…Kf3 3 Rb5 Kg4, the h3-pawn is protected and White cannot strengthen his position. Therefore, he plays 2 Ra1! R×f5 (2…Ra6 3 K×h3+–) 3 a6 Rf8 4 a7 Ra8 and cuts the black king off horizontally by 5 Ra3! in order to slow its march to the a7-pawn. The following line shows what happens then: 5…Ke2 6 K×h3 Kd2 7 Kg4 Kc2 8 Kf5 Kb2 9 Ra6! Kb3 10 Ke6 Kb4 11 Kd6! Kb5 12 Ra1 Kb6 13 Rb1+ Ka6 14 Kc7! R×a7+ 15 Kc6+–.

Now – the correct solution!

1…Kd3!! 2 Rf1

In case of 2 Rd1+, 2…Ke4? is bad in view of 3 Rf1+–. The simplest is 2…Ke3, but 2…Ke2 is also playable: 3 Rd5 Kf3= or 3 Ra1 R×f5 4 a6 Rf8 5 a7 Ra8 6 Ra3 Kd2= (here Black has an extra tempo in comparison with 2…Kf2).

2…Ke2 3 Rf4! Ke3 4 Ra4 R×f5 5 a6 Rf8 6 a7 Ra8 7 K×h3 Kd3 8 Kg4 Kc3 9 Kf5 Kb3 10 Ra1 Kb4 11 Ke6



11…Kc5!

This case of shouldering is familiar to us from the analysis of the Kasparov-Short ending. 11…Kb5? is bad: 12 Kd6! Kb6 13 Rb1+ – this is precisely what results from 1…Kf2?.

12 Kd7 Kb6 13 Rb1+ Kc5! 14 Rb7 Rh8=.

9/10. Beliavsky-Radulov, Leningrad 1977

1…g3? 2 Rg6 g2 3 Kb3 Rf4 (3…Kf2 4 Kb4=) 4 a6 leads to a draw. The white pawn is advanced far enough, so Black has no time either for utilizing the fact that the white king is cut off along the fourth rank (4…Kf2 5 a7) or for interfering by 4…Rg4.

1…Rf5!

It is important to chain the white rook to the defense of the pawn. If 2 Kb3 g3 3 Kb4 g2 4 Rg6, the bridge technique is decisive: 4…Rf4+ △ 5…Rg4.

2 Ra8 g3 3 a6 Rf6! 4 a7 Rf7! White resigned.

9/11. D. Gurgenidze, 1987

1 c3!!

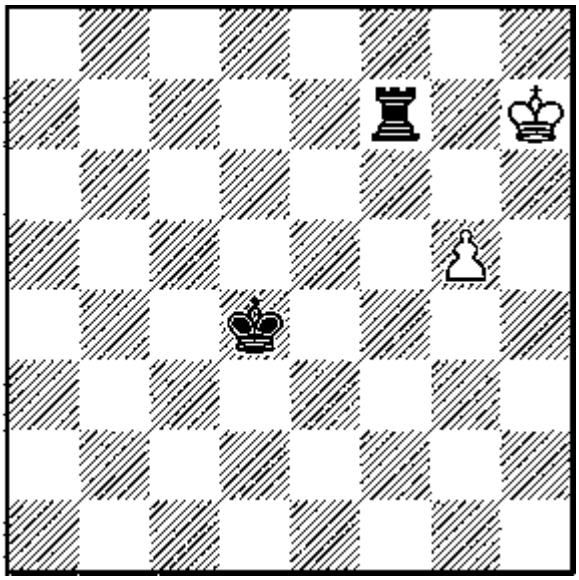
As soon becomes clear, 1 c4? loses. In the upcoming rook-versus-pawn endgame, White plays for stalemate, and therefore the c-pawn should be left to be captured by the black king.

1 Re1? is very bad in view of 1…Rf8+!. However, after Inarkiev's suggestion 1 Re7!? (with the idea of 1…Rf8+ 2 Ke6), Black seems to have no win, for example, 1…Rb8 2 Ra7+ Kb1 3 g4

K×c2 4 Ra2.

1…Rf8+! 2 Kg6 Kb3 3 R×b2+ (3 Re1? Rg8+ △ …R×g2–+) **3…K×b2 4 g4 K×c3 5 g5 Kd4 6 Kh7! Rf7+!?** (the last trap)

16-80



W?

7 Kh8!

7 Kh6? is a mistake: 7…Ke5 8 g6 Rf1 9 g7 Kf6–+.

7…Ke5 8 g6 Rf8+ 9 Kh7 Kf6 10 g7 Rf7 11 Kh8 R×g7 stalemate.

9/12. V. & M. Platov, 1923

1 e6

After 1 Rb7+? Ka6 2 e6, Black holds by means of 2…c5+! 3 Kc3(d3) (3 Ke5? d6+) 3…Rf5!?.

1…Rf6

If 1…Rf8, then 2 R×d7 f3 (2…Re8 3 Ke5) 3 Rb7+! Ka6 (3…Ka4 4 Rf7 Rd8+ 5 Kc4) 4 Rf7 Rd8+ 5 Kc5 R×d2 6 e7 Re2 7 K×c6 f2 (7…Rc2+ 8 Kd7 Rd2+ 9 Ke8 f2 10 Kf8+–) 8 R×f2! R×e7 9 Ra2#.

2 Rb7+!

This zwischenschach is necessary. The win of a rook for a pawn in the line 2 ed? Rd6+ 3 Ke5 R×d2 4 Ke6 f3 5 Rc8 Re2+ 6 Kd6 Rd2+ 7 Kc7 c5= only draws.

2…Ka6

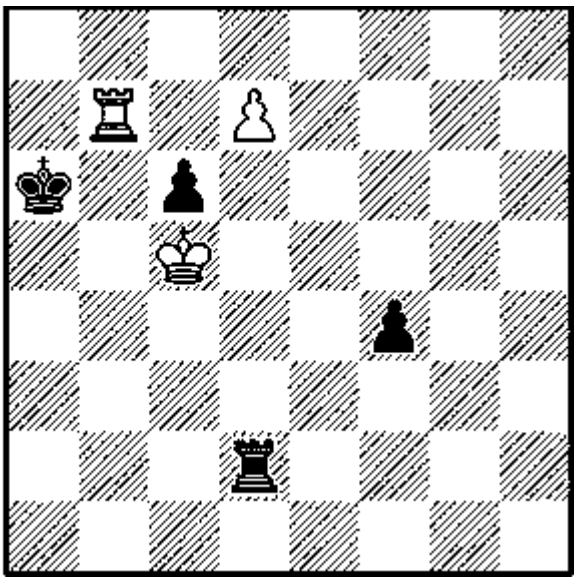
After 2…Ka4 3 ed Rd6+ 4 Kc5 R×d2, an interference on the d-file decides: 5 Rb4+ △ 6 Rd4.

3 ed Rd6+

3…Rf8 4 Rc7 Rd8 5 Kc5 f3 6 Kd6 f2 7 R×c6+ and 8 Rc1+–.

4 Kc5 R×d2

16-81



W?

5 Rb2!

White improves the position of the rook with tempo, utilizing the fact that 5…R×d7 is impossible in view of 6 K×c6. 5 Rb3? is wrong: 5…f3! 6 K×c6 (6 R×f3 Kb7=) 6…Rc2+ with a draw.

5…Rd3

Black cannot create a fortress with a rook against a queen: 5…R×b2 6 d8Q Rc2+ 7 Kb4 Rb2+ 8 Kc4 Rb5 9 Qc7+–. 5…Rd1 is also bad: 6 K×c6 Rc1+ 7 Kd6 Rd1+ 8 Kc7 Rc1+ 9 Kd8 f3 10 Rd2!+–.

6 Rb3!

The rook occupies the third rank in order to prevent the advance of the f-pawn. 6 K×c6? is premature: 6…Rc3+ 7 Kd6 Rd3+ 8 Kc7 Rc3+ 9 Kd8 Re3! (rather than 9…f3? 10 Rd2!+–) 10 Rd2 Kb7=.

6…Rd2 7 K×c6 Rc2+ 8 Kd6 Rd2+ 9 Kc7 Rc2+ 10 Kd8 Re2!? (with the idea 11 Rd3? Kb7) **11 Rf3!**

Black must protect the pawn, but his rook will be too close to the white king.

11…Re4 12 Kc7 Rc4+ 13 Kd6 Rd4+ 14 Kc6! Rc4+ 15 Kd5+–.

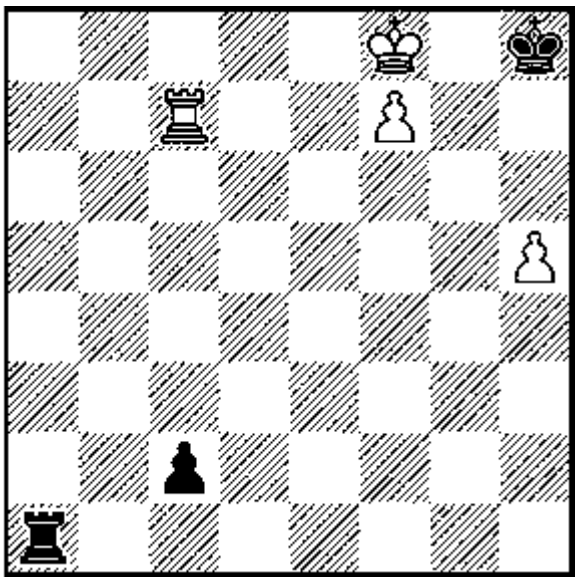
9/13. Petrosian-Karpov, USSR ch, Moscow 1976

In case of 1…Kh6?, White wins similarly to Lasker's study: 2 f7 Kh7 (2…Ra1 3 Kg8) 3 h6 K×h6 (3…Ra1 4 R×c2) 4 Kg8 Rg1+ 5 Kh8 Rf1 6 Rc6+ Kh5 7 Kg7 Rg1+ 8 Kh7 Rf1 9 Rc5+ Kh4 10 Kg7 Rg1+ 11 Kh6 Rf1 12 Rc4+ Kh3 13 Kg6 Rg1+ 14 Kh5 Rf1 15 Rc3+ Kg2 16 R×c2+.

1…Kh8! 2 f7 Ra1!

He must begin the counterattack immediately! Otherwise White plays 3 h6, and the black king is denied the important g7-square.

16-82



W

3 Ke7

The king has a refuge from vertical checks: h6. However, Black manages to hold because of a stalemate!

3…Re1+ 4 Kf6 Rf1+ 5 Kg6 Rg1+ 6 Kh6 c1Q+! 7 R×c1 Rg6+!=

In the actual game, 3 R×c2 was played (instead of 3 Ke7). Black forced the white king far from the pawns with a series of side checks: 3…Ra8+ 4 Ke7 Ra7+ 5 Kf6 (5 Ke6 Ra6+ 6 Kd7 Ra7+ 7 Rc7 R×c7+ 8 K×c7 Kg7=) 5…Ra6+ 6 Kg5 Ra5+ 7 Kg4 Ra4+ 8 Kg3 Ra3+ 9 Kg2 Kg7 10 Rf2 Kf8 11 Rf5 Ra6!

11…Ra7? loses to 12 h6 Ra6 (12…R×f7 13 h7) 13 Rh5.

12 Kg3 Rh6 13 Kg4

Draw, in view of 13…Rh7.

9/14. Yakovich-Savchenko, Rostov 1993

1 Rg1!!=

1 Kh2? Ra4! 2 Kg3 Kh5–+ is bad. Now White impedes Black's king activation in time, for example, 1…Kh5 2 Kh2 Ra4 3 Rg5+.

1…R×a5 2 Kh3 Ra8 3 Rg3 Re8 4 Rg1 Re6 5 Rg3 Rf6 6 Rg2 Rf8 (6…f4 7 Kg4 f3 8 Rf2=) 7 Rg1 (7 Rg5) 7…f4 8 Kg2 f3+ 9 Kf2 Rf5 10 Rg4 Kh5 11 Ra4 Draw.

White could also successfully apply another defensive method, the occupation of the eighth rank with his rook: 1 Re8! R×a5 (1…Kh5 2 Rh8+ Kg4 3 Rh6) 2 Rh8+ Kg7 3 Rb8=.

9/15. G. Levenfish, V. Smyslov, 1957

This position resembles the ending Tarrasch-Chigorin, but the solution is completely different.

Black holds with **1…Ra1!** (△ 2…a2) because White cannot remove the f-pawn from the third rank in time, for example, 2 Kf4 a2 3 Ra4 Kg6 (or 3…Kf7, but not 3…Kf6? 4 Ra7!⊙ Kg6(e6) 5.g5 ⊙+– – Pogosyan) 4 Ra6+ (4 Ra7 Kf6 5 g5+ Kg6=, and White is in zugzwang) 4…Kg7 5 g5 Kf7 6 Kf5 Rf1 7 Ra7+ Kg8! 8 R×a2 R×f3+ 9 Kg6 Rf8=.

The attempt 1…Rb2? loses after 2 Ra4 a2 3 Ra6 (rather than 3 Kf4?? Rb4+) 3…Kf7 4 f4 or 4 g5 etc.

9/16. Bernstein-Zuckerman, Paris 1929

The main question is which pawn should be advanced first?

1 h6!

Bernstein played 1 g6? a2 2 Kg2 Rb1! 3 R×a2 Rb5 4 Ra8+ Kg7 5 Ra7+ Kg8 6 Rh7, and now 6…Rb3! could have led to a draw à la Kasparian (see diagram 9-56). Instead of this, Black played 6…Rg5+?? and lost.

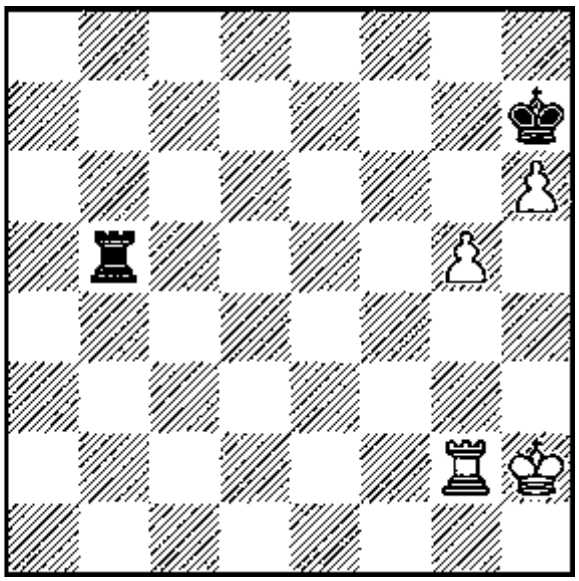
1…a2

Both 1…Kf8 2 Ra8+ Kf7 3 h7 and 1…Kh8 2 Kg2 Ra2+ 3 Kf3 Ra1 4 g6 are quite bad.

2 Kh2! (2 Kg2? Rb1 3 R×a2 Rb5=) **2…Rb1 3 R×a2 Rb5 4 Rg2 Kh7**

16-83

W?



5 g6+!

But surely not 5 Kh3? Kg6, arriving at the Kling and Horwitz drawn position.

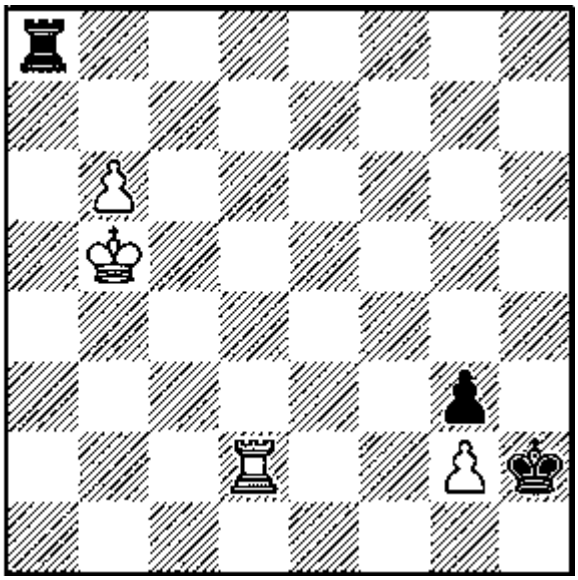
5…Kg8 6 Rg3! Ra5 7 Rb3 Rh5+ 8 Rh3 Rg5 9 h7+ (9 g7 Kh7 10 Rg3 is equivalent) **9…Kh8 10 Rg3 Rh5+ 11 Kg2 Kg7 12 Rh3 Rg5+ 13 Kf3 Rf5+ 14 Kg4 Rf8 15 Kg5**+–.

9/17. Mednis-Djukic, Nis 1977

1…Ra8+! (an important zwischenschach that entices the white king to reach the b-file; 1…g3? 2 b7 Rf8 3 Rb2! △ Ka6-a7 is bad for Black) **2 Kb5 g3**

16-84

W



Mednis chose 3 b7 Rf8! 4 Rc2 (if 4 Ka6, the same reply follows) 4…Rf2!

Amusingly, the standard exchange offer saves Black even in such an apparently hopeless situation. In case of 5 b8Q R×c2 6 Qa8, the simplest is 6…R×g2=. A waiting tactic is also possible: 6…Rf2 7 Kc4 Kg1 8 Kd3 Kh2 9 Ke3 Kg1 10 Qd5 Kh1= (rather than 10…Kh2? in view of the zugzwang after 11 Qf3!).

5 Rc4 Rf8 6 Rc8 Rf2 7 b8Q Rb2+ 8 Kc4 R×b8 9 R×b8 K×g2 10 Kd3 Kf2 11 Rf8+ Ke1! Draw.

As grandmaster Pal Benko demonstrated, White could win after **3 Rb2!** (instead of 3 b7) **3…Rf8 4 Kc4! Rf2 5 Kc3 Rf7 6 b7 R×b7 7 R×b7 K×g2 8 Kd2!** (8…Kf2 9 Rf7+, and the king cannot go to e1).

Black can try 5…Rf8!? (instead of 5…Rf7) 6 b7 Rb8 7 Kd4 Kg1 8 Kd5 Kh2 (8…R×b7 9 R×b7 K×g2 10 Ke4+–) 9 Kc6 Rf8!, hoping for 10 Kc7 Rf7+ 11 Kb6? (11 Kd6? R×b7=) 11…Rf2!=. However, after 10 Kd6!, he is in zugzwang, for example, 10…Kg1 (10…Rg8 11 Kc7 Rg7+ 12 Kb6 Rg8 13 Ka7+–) 11 Kc7 Rf7+ 12 Kb6 Rf2 13 Rb1+ (or 13 Rb3), winning.

Grandmaster Karsten Müller has proven that even after **3 b7 Rf8!** White still can win: instead of 4 Rc2?, he should play **4 Ra2! Rf2 5 Ra4 Rf8 6 Kc6 K×g2 7 Ra8 Rf6+ 8 Kc5 Rf5+ 9 Kc4 Rf4+ 10 Kc3! Rf3+ 11 Kd2 Rb3 12 b8Q**+–.

9/18 Yusupov-Malaniuk, USSR ch, Moscow 1983

1…Rf8! (△ Rf4) **2 Kc2!**

Yusupov ably prevents Black's plans. If 2…Rf4?, then 3 R×f4 gf 4 g5 Ke2 (4…Ke3 5 Kd1!) 5 g6 f3 6 g7 f2 7 g8Q f1Q 8 Qc4+ is decisive.

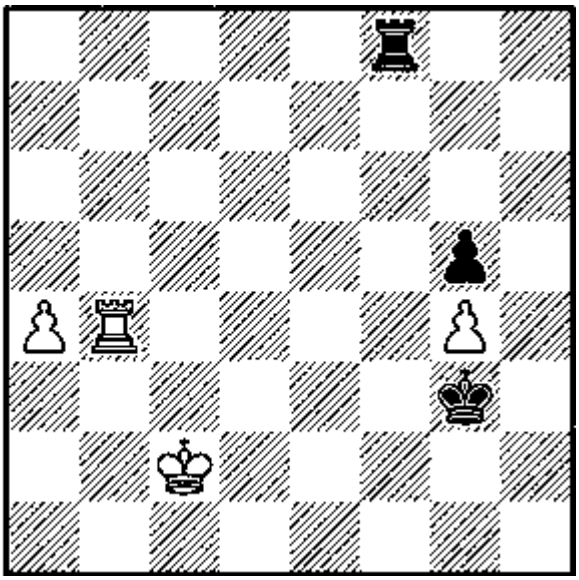
2…Kg3!

The king clears the way for the future of the upcoming passed f-pawn.

3 a4

16-85

B?



The game continued 3…Rf4? 4 R×f4 gf 5 g5 f3 6 g6 f2 7 g7 f1Q 8 g8Q+ Kh4 11 Qd8+!. Black resigned because he could not prevent a queen exchange: 11…Kg4(h5) 12 Qd1+ or 11…Kg3(h3) 12 Qd3+. As can be easily seen, after 8…Kh2 or 8…Kh3, the white queen gives a pair of checks and enters the d-file with a forced exchange to follow.

After the game, Malaniuk expressed the opinion that a frontal attack could have saved him: 3…Ra8!? 4 Kb3 Kf3 5 Rd4 Kg3 6 Kb4 Rb8+ 7 Kc5 Ra8 8 Kb6 Rb8+ 9 Kc6 Ra8 10 Kb7 Ra5 11 Kb6 Ra8 12 a5 Rb8+ 13 Kc6 (13 Ka7? Rb1=) 13…Ra8 14 Ra4 R×a5 15 R×a5 K×g4. Of course, this would not work: in the final position, both 16 Kd5 and 16 Ra8 Kf3 17 Rf8+! Ke3 18 Rg8! Kf4 19 Kd5 g4 20 Kd4 Kf3 21 Kd3 g3 22 Rf8+ win for White.

Black's play can be improved in this line if he abandons his frontal attack in a timely fashion, for the basic plan in such positions, repositioning the rook to f4, 10…Rf8! (instead of 10…Ra5?) 11 a5 Rf4= (as given by Müller).

Salov and Ionov discovered the same idea in a different setting: they proposed giving a series of checks from the side (similar to the Taimanov-Averbakh endgame), to drive White's king into an inferior position, before offering the exchange of rooks on f4.

3…Rf2+!? 4 Kc3 Rf3+ 5 Kb2 (5 Kd2 Rf2+ 6 Kd1 Ra2 7 Kc1 Rf2) **5…Rf4! 6 R×f4 gf 7 g5 f3 8 g6 f2 9 g7 f1Q 10 g8Q+ Kh4**

White can no longer trade queens, so the game should end in a draw.

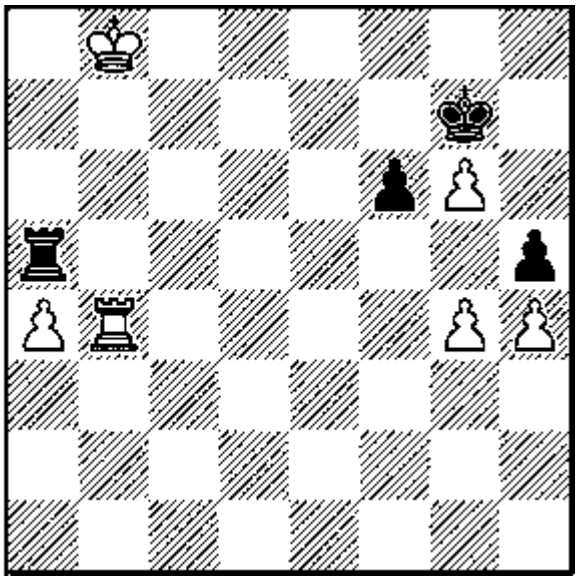
9/19. Stein-Vaganian, Vrnjacka Banja 1971

1…Ra5? 2 Kc7 would be very bad. In such situations, Black's hopes usually lie in active kingside counterplay. Vaganian decided to break up the opposing pawn chain with …h7-h5!.

1…Kg7 2 Kc8 h5! 3 gh g5!= (the best defense, however 3…gf 4 Kb8 Ra5 5 Kb7 Re5! may not lose either) 4 Kb8 Ra5 5 hg (5 Kb7 R×f5 6 Kb6 Rf4!=) 5…fg 6 Rb7+ (6 Kb7 R×f5=) 6…Kh6 7 f6 R×a4 Draw.

White's play was not best. He could have played 3 Kb8! Ra5 4 fg.

16-86

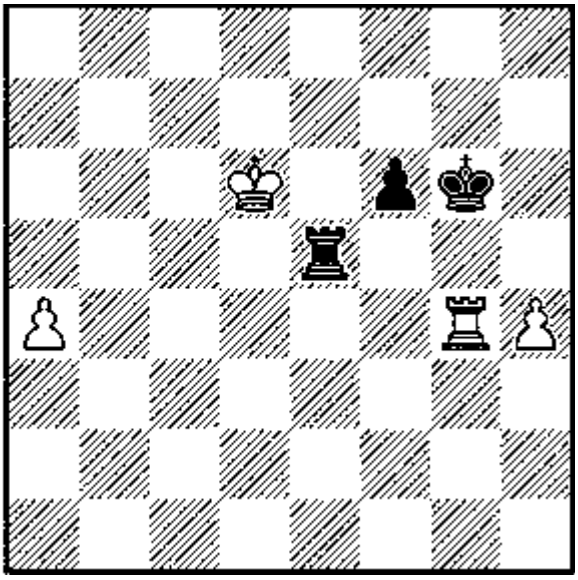


B?

In Lubomir Ftacnik's opinion, the position after 4…hg 5 R×g4 f5 6 Rg5 R×a4 7 h5 f4 8 h6+ K×h6 9 g7 K×g5 10 g8Q+ Kh4 is drawn; however, the computer endgame tablebase says White must win.

Ftacnik also examined the line 4…K×g6 5 Kb7 Re5 6 Kb6 Re6+ 7 Kc5 Re5+ 8 Kd6 hg 9 R×g4+.

16-87



B?

But he suggested the incorrect 9…Kh5? 10 Rc4 Kg6, which loses in view of 11 Rc5!, and White advances both pawns to the fifth rank.

Correct is 9…Kh6!, with the idea, after 10 Rc4(b4), to reply 10…Ra5! 11 Kc6 f5 12 Kb6 Ra8 13 a5 Rb8+!. For example, 14 Ka7 (14 Kc6 Ra8 15 Kb5 Rb8+ 16 Ka4 Ra8) 14…Rb1 (14…Rf8? does not work: 15 Rf4+–) 15 a6 Kh5! 16 Ka8 Rb2 17 a7, and now the saving move is 17…Rb5! (or 17…Rb6! 18 Rd4 Rb5!) 18 Rd4 (18 Rf4 Kg6) 18…Rb6! (but not 18…Rb1? 19 Rd5 Kg4 20 h5 f4 21 h6 f3 22 h7 f2 23 Rd7+–) 19 Rd5 Kg4 20 h5 f4, as the h-pawn cannot advance any farther.

And so the plan selected by Vaganian is objectively sufficient for a draw, but to achieve this demands a considerable amount of accuracy in the face of correct play by his opponent. Far more effective is an unexpected tactical idea found thirty years later by Irina Kulish: to play for stalemate!

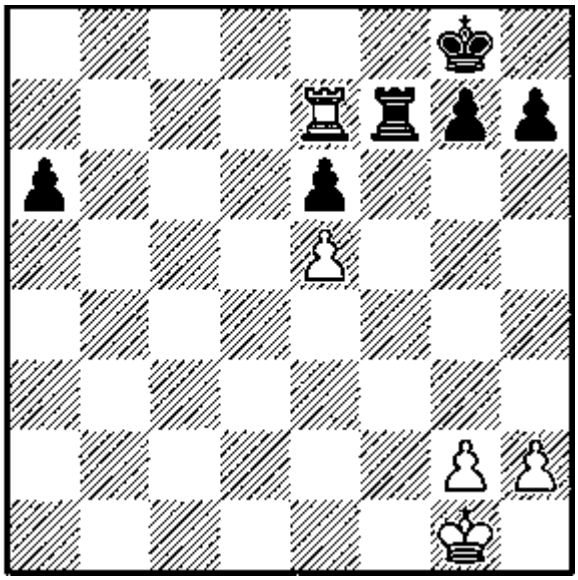
1…gf 2 gf Kh5! followed by 3…h6 and 4…R×a4!.

9/20. Eliseevic-Pytel, Trstenik 1979

After 1…a5? 2 R×e6 Re4 (△ …Kf7) 3 Re7 Kf8 4 Ra7 R×e5 5 Kf2, Black's extra pawn does not offer him any real winning chances. The only promising possibility is to place the rook behind the distant passed pawn.

1…Rf4+! 2 Kg1 (2 Ke2 Re4+ and 3…R×e5) **2…Rf7!** (rather than 2…Rf8 3 Ra7!=).

16-88



W?

In the game, Black's plan was completely successful.

3 R×e6 Ra7 4 Rd6 a5 5 e6 Kf8 6 Rd3 Ke7 7 Kf2 K×e6 8 Ke3 a4 9 Ra3 Kd5 10 Kd3 Kc5 11 Kc3 Kb5 12 Kb2 Kc4 13 Rg3 a3+! 14 Ka2 Kd4 15 Rh3 h6 16 Rg3 g5 White resigned. 17 h4 is met with 17…Ra5, and if 18 Rb3, then 18…Ke4 19 Rb6 Kf4 20 R×h6 g4 △ 21…Kg3–+.

White should have defended his position more actively. Prior to blocking the passed pawn with his rook, he had enough time to win one of the kingside pawns.

3 Re8+! Rf8 4 R×e6 Ra8 5 Re7 (5 Rd6 is worse in view of 5…Ra7!?) **5…a5 6 e6 a4 7 Rd7 Kf8** (7…a3 8 e7) **8 Rf7+ Ke8 9 R×g7 Ra5 10 Rc7 a3 11 Rc1 a2 12 Ra1 Ke7 13 Kf2 K×e6 14 Ke3** Black still stands better, but a draw seems very likely.

9/21. Fernandez Garcia-Kotronias, Dubai ol 1986

The game continued 1…Ra3?? 2 a6 Ra2 3 a7 Ra3 (3…Kg4 4 Rf8 R×a7 5 R×f6+–) 4 f3!+–, and we already know the rest from the ending Unzicker-Lundin.

A draw could be reached after **1…g5! 2 hg fg 3 a6 Kg6 4 Kf1** (△ 5 a7 Kg7 6 f4+–) **4…g4**=. 1…Ke6!? 2 a6 Kf7 3 Kf3 (3 Ra7+ Ke6) 3…Kg7 was also playable.

9/22. Kholmov-Timoshchenko, USSR chsf, Pavlodar 1982

As Kholmov discovered after the game, he could have obtained a draw after **1 Kh2!** △ 2 g3 (see diagram 9-145).

However, he actually played 1 Ra4+? Kc3! (2…Kb3 was threatened) 2 Ra8, and after 2…f5!, his position became lost. Black's winning plan is simple: the pawn comes to f4, the king attacks the h4-pawn and, when this pawn is eliminated, Black gets a passed f-pawn.

3 Ra7 (3 Kh2 f4) 3…f4+ 4 Kh2 Kd4 5 Ra4+ Ke5 6 Ra3 Kf5 7 Ra6 Kg4 8 R×g6+ K×h4 9 Ra6 Kg5 10 Ra8 h4 11 Rg8+ Kf6 12 Ra8 h3! 13 gh f3 14 Ra3 Ke5 White resigned.

9/23. Yusupov-Timman, Linares cmsf (7) 1992

Where should White place his rook, at the side of his passed pawn or behind it?

The winning move was **1 Re4!**. Here the rook protects only one pawn but at the first appropriate opportunity it will go to the fifth rank where it holds everything. For example, 1…Kf5 2 Re5+ Kf6 3 a5+–, or 1…Ra5 2 Ke3 Rd5 3 Re5!. Black has no arguments against a king march to the queenside.

The actual continuation was 1 Ra1?? Ra5! (he should block the pawn as early as possible) 2 Ke3 e5!.

This is the point: one pair of pawns is exchanged immediately, another will be exchanged soon (…g6-g5), and too few pawns remain on the board.

3 Ke4 (3 fe+ K×e5 4 Kd3 Kd5 5 Kc3 Kc6 6 Kb4 Re5=) 3…ef 4 K×f4 (after 4 gf the white

pawns are vulnerable) 4…Ke6 5 Ke4

He probably should have tried 5 Re1+ Kf6 6 Re4 g5+ 7 Ke3, but this position is also drawn.

5…g5! 6 hg R×g5 7 Kf3 Ra5, and a draw was soon agreed.

9/24. Taimanov-Chekhov, Kishinev 1976

White wants to play e3-e4+, and then slowly improve his position with a2-a4, f2-f3, Kg4, Rb5 etc. And although objectively White's advantage is insufficient to win, Black should still avoid passive defense.

1…Rd3! 2 R×b6

White could have tried 2 a4!? Ra3 3 Kf3⊙, but after 3…g4+! 4 R×g4 b5! 5 ab Rb3, a drawn endgame with two pawns versus one would have arisen.

2…Ra3=

The white rook must occupy a passive position. After 3 Rb2 Ra4, a draw was agreed. I worked with Valery Chekhov as his coach from 1973 until 1975, and our collaboration was crowned with his victory in the World Junior Chess Championship. All of my students firmly absorbed the most important principles of playing endgames. Therefore, for Chekhov, the utilization of the pawn sacrifice to activate the rook was just a simple technical device.

9/25. Larsen-Kavalek, Solingen m (7) 1970

Kavalek chose 1…Kg7?? 2 Rc4 Ra7 (2…Rb3 3 R×a4 R×g3 4 Rg4+). Against such a passively placed rook, White wins without trouble, and the remainder of the game confirms this generalization.

3 Kc3 h5 4 Kb4 Kg6 5 Rc6+ Kg7 6 Rc5 Kh6 7 Kb5 (△ Rc4) 7…Re7 8 K×a4 Re3 9 g4 hg 10 hg Re4+ 11 Kb5 R×g4 12 a4 Rg1 13 a5 Rb1+ 14 Kc6 Ra1 15 Kb6 Rb1+ 16 Rb5 Rf1 17 a6 Rf6+ 18 Ka5 Rf7 19 Rb6+ Kg5 20 Rb7 Rf1 21 a7 Kh6 22 Rb6+ Kg7 23 Ra6 Black resigned.

He had to keep the rook active, responding to Rc4 with the counterattack …Rb3!, for this purpose Black should take measures against a rook check from g4.

1…Kf7 seems natural, as the king approaches the center. White could respond with 2 g4, intending 3 h4 and 4 Rc4. If 2…Ke6 3 h4 Kd5, then 4 g5! △ 5 Rg3 followed by either 6 Rg4 (attacking the a4-pawn) or 6 h5 (the rook behind the passed pawn). However, Black seems to escape by playing 4…Rf7! 5 Rg3 Rf4 6 h5 Ke6! 7 g6 (7 Kc3 Kf⩲) 7…hg 8 hg Rc4+! (it is important to cut the king off from the a-pawn) 9 Kd3 Rc8 10 g7 Kf7. Karsten Müller has demonstrated another way to draw: 2…h5! 3 gh (3 g5 h4; 3 Rc4 Rb3) 3…Kg7 4 h4 Kh7 5 Rc4 Rb3! 6 R×a4 Rf3. This is the standard drawing situation with a- and h-pawns: the king blockades one of the pawns (or in this case – both at once, which is unimportant), while the rook attacks the other from the side, not letting the enemy rook off the a-file.

White's play can be strengthened by the inbetween check 2 Rf3+!. If 2…Kg6?, then 3 Rf4 (now that Black cannot play 3…Rb3 4 R×a4 R×g3 5 Rg4+), and on 2…Ke6, there comes 3 g4 followed by 4 h4, retaining the advantage – with the king in the center, the …h7-h5 pawn sacrifice would be ineffective.

1…h5!!

The only safe defense. 2 Rc4 is useless now: 2…Rb3! 3 R×a4 R×g3=. If 2 h4, then 2…Rg7! △ …Rg4=, and from g4 the rook attacks the g3-pawn, protects the a4-pawn and prevents White's king march across the fourth rank.

2 g4 can be met by 2…h4!=, fixing a target for counterattack (the h3-pawn): 3 Rc4 Rb3⇄. But 2…hg 3 hg Kg7 does not lose either: 4 Rc4 Rb3! (activity at any price!) 5 R×a4 Rg3 6 Kb2 Rg2+ 7 Kc3 Rg3+.

As can be seen, after 1…h5!, Black's rook remains active in all lines, and this is what saves him.

9/26. Kovacevic-Rajkovic, Yugoslavia 1983

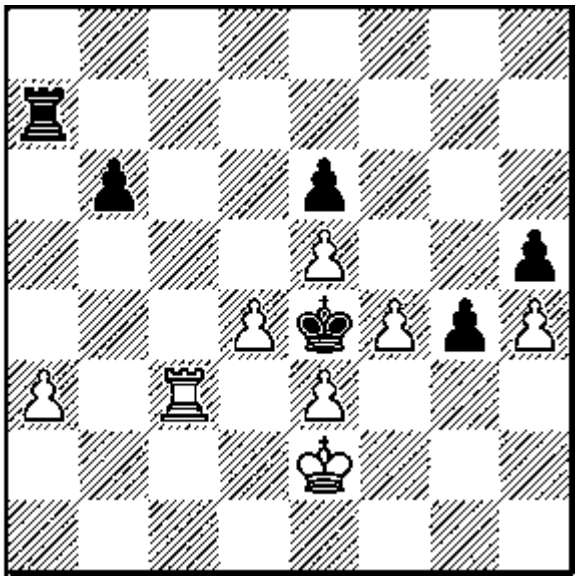
1…g4+? 2 Kf4 is hopeless. In the game, Black resigned after a single move: 1…gh? 2 gh, in view of 2…Rg7 3 a4 (△ 4 a5 ba 5 Rc5#) or 2…Ra8 3 Rc7 R×a3 4 Rd7+.

Instead of being persecuted, the black king could have become a dangerous attacking piece!

1…f4!! 2 gf (2 ef K×d4; 2 hg fe 3 K×e3 Rg7 4 Rb3 R×g5 5 R×b6 R×g3+ 6 Kf2 R×a3=) **2…g4+! 3 Ke2 Ke4**=

16-89

W



The king's activity fully compensates Black for his deficit of two pawns.

9/27. Kozlovskaya-Carvajal, Rio de Janeiro izt 1979

The king must take part in the fight against the passed pawns.

1…Rc2! 2 c6 Ke7! 3 R×e5+ Kd6∓

The king has arrived at the center and firmly blocked the pawns. White should play carefully to avoid grave problems.

In the actual game, however, Black was too greedy.

1…R×a3? 2 Rc1!

The rook goes behind the passed pawn that is farthest from the black king and therefore the most dangerous.

2…Ke8 3 c6 Kd8 4 c7+ Kc8 5 d6. Black resigned in view of 5…Rd3 6 Rc6 △ 7 Rb6 or 7 R×a6.

9/28. Obukhov-Ibragimov, USSR 1991

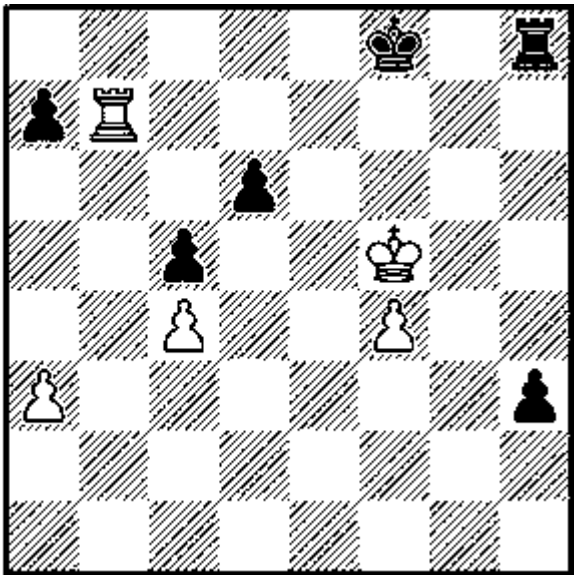
White's passivity, 1 Rh1?, caused a quick loss: 1…h3 2 Rh2 a6⊙ 3 Kg4 (3 Kg5 Rg8+ 4 Kf5 Rg3) 3…Kf6 4 R×h3 R×h3 5 K×h3 d5! White resigned.

His only correct plan was to activate the rook!

1 Rb1! h3 2 Rb7+ Kf8□

16-90

W?



White had undoubtedly considered this line, but failed to discover how it should have been

continued. In fact, 3 Rb8+? fails to 3…Kg7 4 Rb7+ Kh6–+ and 3 Kf6? to 3…Rh6+ 4 Kg5 h2–+. If 3 Kg6?, then 3…Rh4! decides: 4 f5 h2 5 Rb8+ (5 f6 Rg4+ or 5…Rh6+) 5…Ke7 6 f6+ Kd7 7 f7 h1Q–+. But one more possibility exists:

3 Kg5!! h2 (3…Rg8+?? 4 Kf6+–) **4 Rb8+ Kg7 5 Rb7+** with perpetual check.

9/29. Browne-Biyiasas, USA ch, Greenville 1980

The way to a draw is to activate the king.

1…Kc5! 2 Rh7 b6 3 Rc7+ (3 Rb7 Re3) **3…Kb4 4 Rc6 K×b3 5 R×b6+ K×c4**=

Another way, suggested by Benko, also exists: 1…Kc7! 2 Rh7+ Kc8 3 Kf6 b6 4 Re7 Rh3! 5 Ke6 Rh6+ (precisely the same defensive idea as in Savon-Zheliandinov, diagram 9-248).

Black played 1…Re3? instead, allowing 2 Rc8!, so that his king was locked in on the queenside. If 2…R×b3, then 3 Ke6 is decisive.

2…Re5+ 3 Kf6 Re3 4 c5+! dc 5 d6 Rd3 6 Ke7 Re3+ 7 Kd8

Black resigned in view of 7…R×b3 8 d7 Re3 9 Rc7 △ 10 Kc8+–.

Chapter Ten

10/1. Zahrab, IX century

1 Re3 Ng1 2 Kf5!

The mined squares for the kings are f4 and d4.

The premature 2 Kf4? Kd4⊙ misses the win: 3 Re1 Nh3+ 4 Kg3 Ng5 5 Kf4 Nh3+.

2…Kd4 (otherwise 3 Kg4) **3 Kf4**

It is Black who is in zugzwang now!

3…Kc4 4 Kg3 Kd4 5 Re1+–.

10/2. Duz-Khotimirsky-Allakhverdian, Erevan 1938

1 g6! N×g6 2 Rh6!

The game continued 2 Rg5? Nf4 3 Rg8 Ne6! (△ …Kf4, …Ng5=) 4 Rg6 Nf4 5 Rg8 Ne6 Draw.

2…Ne5 3 g5 Nf7 4 Rh5! (4 Rg6? Kg4=) **4…Ne5** (4…Kg4 5 g6) **5 g6!**+– (Kromsky, Osanov).

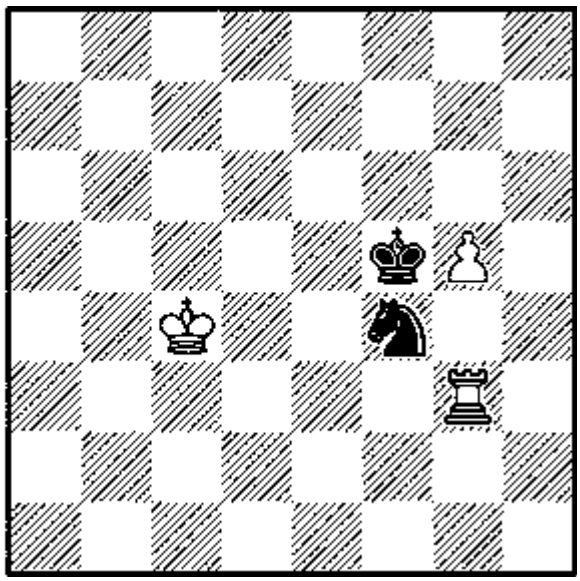
A good idea is to study White's alternatives and discover new positions where a rook and a pawn cannot beat a knight.

After 1 Rh6 Nf7! 2 Ra6? (2 Rh5!) 2…N×g5 3 Ra4 Kf3 4 Kc2 Ne6 5 Kc3 Ng5, the white king cannot come closer to the pawn. If White plays 6 Rc4 and directs the king around the rook along the fifth rank, Black brings his king to h4 and attacks the pawn in time. For example, 6…Kg3 7 Kb4 Kh4 8 Kc5 Nh3 9 Kd5 Nf2 10 Ke5 Kg5=.

Another attempt can be 1 Rh1? K×g4 2 Rg1+ Kf5 3 Ke2 Ng6 4 Ke3 Nh4 5 Rg3 Ng6 6 Kd4 Nf4 7 Kc4

16-91

B



Now the simplest defensive plan is to force the pawn advance to the seventh rank. The edge of the board will then be an obstacle to an invasion by the white king.

7…Ne6!? 8 g6 Kf6 9 Rg4 Ng7 10 Kd5 Nf5 11 Kc5 Ne7! (rather than 11…Ng7? 12 Kd6 Nf5+ 13 Kd7 or 11…Kg7? 12 Kc6! Ne7+ 13 Kd6 N×g6 14 Ke6!) 12 g7 Kf7 13 Rg5 Ng8 14 Kd5 Ne7+ 15 Ke5 Ng8, and White cannot make any progress.

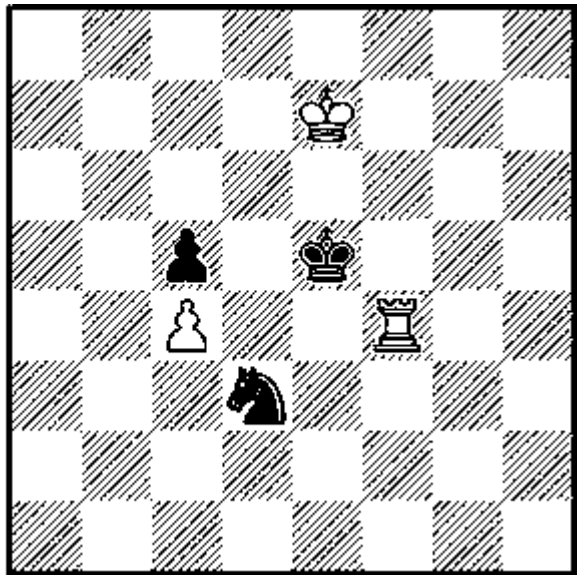
A waiting policy is also good: 7…Ng6 8 Kd5 Nf4+ 9 Kd6 Ng6 10 Rg1 Nh4! 11 Ke7 Kg6 12 Ke6 Nf3=. In this line, 10…Nf4? (instead of 10…Nh4!) loses: 11 Ke7 Kg6 12 Rg3! Nh5 13 Rg4! Ng7 14 Kd6! (14 Rg1? Nf5+ 15 Ke6 Nd4+ and 16…Nf3=) 14…Kf5 15 Rg1 Nh5 16 Ke7 Kg6 17 Ke6 Nf4+ 18 Ke5+–.

10/3. P. Benko, 1986

The white king has already invaded the black camp, therefore Black's idea is to attack the pawn rather than to create a fortress. He will even readily sacrifice his knight for the pawn.

In case of 1 Rh4? Nb2! 2 Kd7 c4 3 Rh5+ (3 Kc7 Na4 4 Rh3 N×c3!=) 3…Ke4 4 Kc6, Black holds by means of 4…Nd1! 5 Rh3 Kf5!! 6 Kc5 Kg4, driving the rook back from the fourth rank. White should take this idea into consideration in all lines.

1 c4+! Ke5



2 Rg4!!

The apparently natural 2 Rh4? could, after 2…Nb2? 3 Kd7 N×c4 4 R×c4 Kd5, lead to the position from the famous study by Réti (diagram 8-10), where White wins: 5 Rc2(c3)!! c4 6 Rc1! Kc5 7 Kc7⊙. However, Black has an adequate defense: 2…Ne1! 3 Kd7 Nf3 4 Rg4 Kf5=.

2…Nb2

2…Ne1 is already useless here: 3 Kd7+–.

3 Rh4!

Rather than 3 Kd7? Kf5 4 Rh4 Kg5 5 Re4 Kf5=.

3…N×c4 (3…Kf5 4 Kd6+–) **4 R×c4 Kd5 5 Rc1! c4 6 Kd7! Kc5 7 Kc7⊙** (7 Ke6? Kd4!=) **7…Kb4** (7…Kd4 8 Kb6) **8 Kd6**+–.

10/4. A. Seleznev, 1920

On 1 Rd7? Ne6 2 Re7 Nc5+ 3 Kb4 Kb7, Black has a comfortable draw. To achieve success, some combinational spirit is necessary!

1 c5! Ne6 (1…dc 2 Rd7 Ne6 3 Re7+–) **2 cd! N×d8 3 dc Nb7! 4 c8R!** (4 c8Q? – stalemate) **4…N×a5 5 Rc5 Nb7 6 Rc6#**.

10/5. L. Kubbel, 1925 (corrected by A. Chéron)

1 d7 Ra8!

Hopeless is 1…Ra1+ 2 Ke2 Ra2+ 3 Kf3 Rd2 4 Nf6 (△ 5 Nd5) 4…Rd6 5 Kg4 followed by 6 Kf5

and 7 K×e5, and if the pawn is defended by the king from d4, then 7 g4 or 7 Kg6.

2 Nh6! (but not 2 Ne7? Kc5 3 Nc8 Ra1+ 4 Ke2 Ra2+) **2…Kd3!** (2…Rd8 3 Nf7 R×d7 4 N×e5+) **3 f3** (3 Nf7?? Ra1#) **3…Ke3 4 Nf5+ Kd3 5 Ne7! Ke3** (5…Rd8 6 Nc6 R×d7 7 N×e5+) **6 Nd5+! Kd3 7 Nc7! Rd8 8 Ne6 R×d7 9 Nc5+**.

10/6. S. Tkachenko, N. Rezvov, 1997

1 d7!

1 Ne6+? is wrong: 1…Ke3 2 d7 Ra4+ 3 Kb7 Rb4+ 4 Kc7 Rc4+ 5 Kd6 Rc1 6 Nc5 Rd1+ 7 Nd3 K×e2=.

1…Ra4+ (1…Rd4? 2 Ne6+) **2 Kb7 Rb4+ 3 Kc6!**

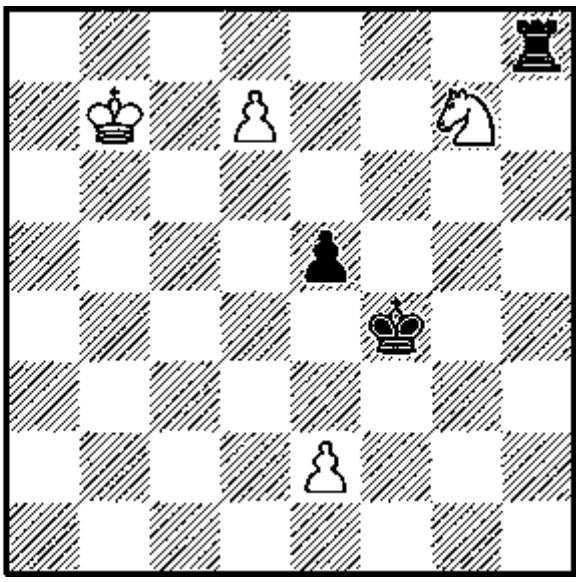
3 Kc7 is useless, as after 3…Rc4+, White must go back to the b-file (4 Kd6? Rd4+).

3…Rb8 (3…Rc4+? 4 Kb5 Rd4 5 Ne6+) **4 Kc7! Ra8! 5 Kb7 Rh8!**

There is no other square on the eighth rank for the rook: 5…Rd8? 6 Ne6+, or 5…Rg8? 6 Ne8.

16-93

W?



6 e4!!

A difficult move to find! Nothing can be gained by 6 Ne8? Rh7 7 Kc6 R×d7 8 K×d7 Ke3=.

6…Kf3!?

The pawn cannot be captured in view of the knight fork: 6…K×e4 7 Ne8 Rh7 8 Nf6+. If 6…Kg5, then 7 Ne8 Rh7 8 Kc6 R×d7 9 K×d7 Kf4 10 Nd6(f6). Finally, 6…Ke3 (△ 7…Rd8) fails to 7 Kc7 Ra8 8 Nf5+! K×e4 9 Nd6+ and 10 Nc8.

7 Kc6! (7 Kc7? Ra8! 8 Nf5 Ra7+ 9 Kc6 R×d7) **7…Rd8**

If 7…Ra8, then 8 Nf5 K×e4 9 Nd6+ △ Nc8.

8 Ne6 R×d7 9 Ng5+! Kg4 10 K×d7 K×g5 11 Ke6! (11 Kd6? Kf6=) **11…Kf4 12 Kd5⊙+–**.

Chapter Eleven

11/1. V. Platov, 1925

1 Kf5! Kg8 2 Ra4!!

The only way to victory is to utilize the bad position of the bishop. After 2 Kg6? Kf8, the black king slips away from the dangerous corner.

2…Be1 (2…Bg3 3 Rg4+; 2…Bf2 3 Kg6 Kf8 4 Rf4+; 2…Bd8 3 Ra8; 2…Be7 3 Kg6) **3 Kg6 Kf8 4 Rf4+!** △ 5 Re4+–.

11/2. J. Vancura, 1924

1 Kf6? Be4 leads to the Cozio drawing position. White wins if he prevents the black bishop's entering the b1-h7 diagonal.

1 Rg4! Bb5 (△ …Bd3) **2 Rd4! Kh7 3 Kf6+–**

The rook completely dominates the bishop. The rest is simple: 3…Bc6 4 Kg5 Kh8 (4…Bb5 5

Rd5 Bc6 6 Re5 Ba4 7 Re7+ Kh8 8 h7) 5 Rc4 Bd5 6 Rc8+ Bg8 7 Re8 Kh7 8 Re7+ Kh8 9 Kg6 Bc4 10 h7+–.

11/3. J. Vancura, 1924

1 Kg5!!

But of course not 1 Kh6? Be4! 2 Ra7 Bb7!= and not 1 Ra7? Be4+! (1…Bb7?? 2 Kh6⊙) 2 Kh6 Bb7 3 Ra4 Be4!=.

1…Bg2 (1…K×h7 2 Rh4+; 1…Bc6 2 Rc4 Bd5 3 Rd4 △ 4 Kh6) **2 Rg4 Bf3** (2…Bh3 3 Rb4 or 3 Rf4) **3 Rf4**+–

The rook has abandoned the a-file, so the king may come back to h6.

11/4. Y. Roslov, 1996*

If 1 Kf2? Bd5 2 Ke3 Kf7 3 Kd4 Bb3, the game arrives at the del Rio position. To avoid this, only tactical measures will do.

1 f7+! Ke7 2 Rd6!! (rather than 2 Rh8? Ba6+! 3 Kf2 K×f7) **2…Bh1**

Amazingly enough, the bishop cannot find refuge from rook attacks: 2…Kf8 3 Rd8+ K×f7 4 Rd7+; 2…Bc8 3 f8Q+ K×f8 4 Rd8+; 2…Bf3 3 f8Q+ (or 3 Rf6).

3 Kg1 Be4 (3…Bb7 4 Rd7+!) **4 Re6+!**.

11/5. Stoliar-Bobotsov, Albena 1973

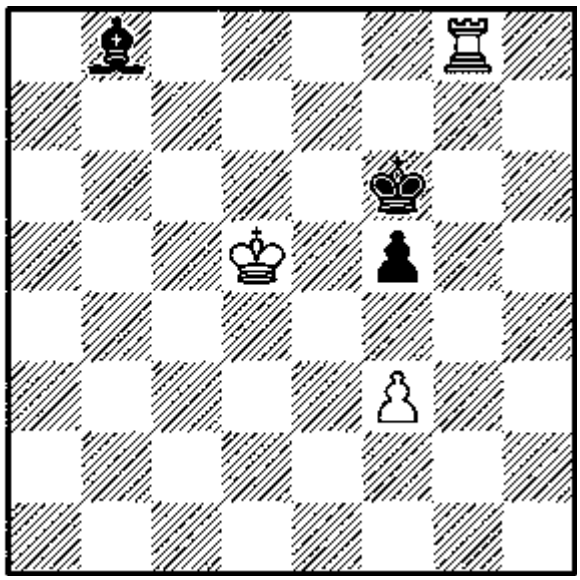
The position after 1…Be3? 2 Re2 f4, like all similar situations with the pawn on a square of the bishop's color, is lost.

The game continuation 1…Bg1? is also incorrect: 2 Re2+ Kf6 (2…Kd6 3 f4! △ 4 Kd3, 5 Re5) 3 Kd5 Ba7 4 Re8! Bf2 5 f4! Black resigned.

1…Bg3! (also possible is 1…Bh4) **2 Re2+ Kf6**

Timman showed that 2…Kd6! 3 Kd4 Bf4 (or 3…Bh4 △ …Bf6+) is also sufficient to hold the draw. However, White can just transpose moves and force the king to retreat to f6: 2 Kd4!? Be5+ 3 Kc5 Bd6+ 4 Kc6 △ 5 Re2+ (Müller).

3 Rg2 Bc7 4 Kd5 Bb8 5 Rg8



5…Bh2!

Black's last move was given by Pfrommer. Timman had examined 5…Bc7? 6 Rf8+ Kg5 7 Ke6 Kf4 8 Rf7! (rather than 8 R×f5+? Ke3 9 Rc5 Bg3! 10 Rc3+ Kf4 11 Kd5 Bf2 △ Be3=) 8…Bb6 (8…Bb8 9 Rb7) 9 R×f5+ Ke3 10 Rf7 △ 11 f4+–.

6 Rf8+ (6 Rh8 Bg3!) **6…Kg5 7 Ke6 Kf4 8 R×f5+ Ke3**= (△ 9…Bf4).

11/6. Moiseev-Botvinnik, USSR ch, Moscow 1952

Black's position is won. The challenge is to find the clearest and most convincing way to bring it home. If 1…Rc3+ 2 Ke4! (2 Kf2 Kf4–+) 2…Rg3 3 Bh3, Black is in zugzwang. The solution will

be clear if we realize that the zugzwang is reciprocal.

1…Rc7!!⊙ 2 Bh3

2 Ke4 Re7 3 Ke5 Re8⊙ is also bad. The remainder of the game was 2 g4 Rc3+ 3 Kg2 h3+ 4 Kh2 Kh4 5 g5 Rc2+, and White resigned.

2…Rc3+ 3 Ke4 Rg3!⊙ 4 Ke5 Re3+

The black king takes the key f4-square under control, invades on g3, and an exchange sacrifice decides.

11/7. A Theoretical Position

This example can be found in many theoretical treatises, given with a wrong or, at least, an imprecise evaluation.

1 b4!

1…a5= should be prevented. Now this move loses a pawn: 2 ba ba 3 Kc5 a4 4 Kb6 Kc8 5 Rg4+–. 1…Bf3 2 a4 Be4 3 a5 ba 4 ba is also hopeless for Black (see diagram 11-28).

Another continuation, 1 Rg4!?, also deserves attention: 1…Bf3 (1…Bb1 2 Kc6! B×a2 3 Rg7+–) 2 Rf4, and if 2…Bg2, then 3 b4, planning a2-a4-a5.

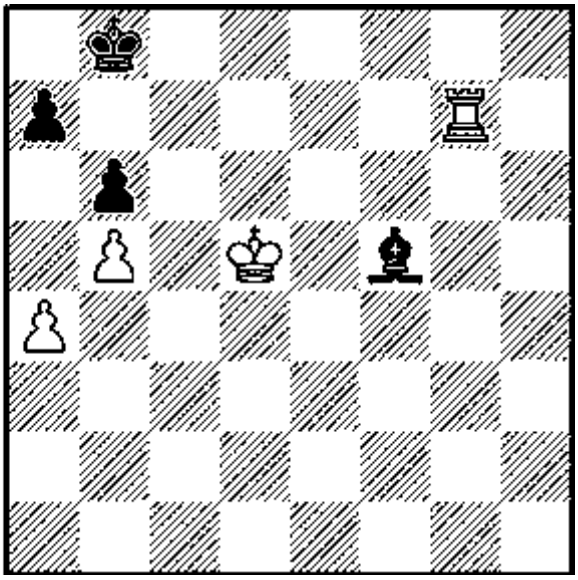
1…Bc2!?

If Black manages to place his bishop on a4, he achieves a draw. The same outcome results from 2 Kc6 Be4+ 3 Kb5 Bd3+ 4 Ka4 Bc2+ 5 Ka3? a6!= (diagram 11-47). This means that White's next move is obligatory.

2 b5!+–

2…Be4 3 a4 Bd3 (3…Bf3 is equivalent) 4 Kd5! Bf5

16-95



W

The diagrammed position is known from Ljubojevic-Keene, Palma de Mallorca 1972 (with reversed colors and wings). Books on theory say it is a draw. We know from the Khalifman-Leko ending that this is not so. The winning plan is simple: White brings his king to b4 and plays a4-a5, arriving at the Elkies position, so the most rapid progress can be achieved after 5 Kc4!.

The players and the annotators ignored this plan because they did not know that the Elkies position is winning. Keene tried to invade with his king to c6, failed to do so, and a draw was agreed.

5 Rg5 Bd3 6 Rg3 Bc2 7 Rg2 (7 Re3? B×a4! 8 Kc6 a6 9 K×b6 B×b5=) 7…Bd3 8 Rf2 (8 Rd2 Bg6! 9 Re2 Bh5 10 Rf2 Kc7! 11 Rf6 Be8! 12 Rf5 Bg6) 8…Kb7 9 Rf7+ Kb8 10 Re7 Bf1 11 Re8+ Kb7 12 Re7+ Draw.

After 12…Kb8, White still could have played 13 Re1! Bg2+ (13…Bd3? 14 Kc6) 14 Kc4+–.

11/8. **Georgadze-Yusupov**, USSR ch, Vilnius 1980

After the inevitable exchange of queens, it is very important for White to also exchange the a5-pawn. Thereafter he will be able to build a fortified camp on the kingside, following one of the

models: diagram 11-38 or diagram 11-46.

This aim could be achieved by means of **1 a3!! Qe5** (1…R×c2? 2 Qd3+) **2 Q×e5 R×e5 3 b4** with a high probability of a draw.

The game continued 1 Bd3? Qe5 2 Q×e5 R×e5 3 Bc4 Re3!, and 4 a3 Ke7 5 b4 did not make sense any longer in view of 5…a4!. Black has a winning position.

4 a4 Ke7 5 h4 Kd6 6 g3 Kc5 7 Kh3 Kb4 8 Kg4 R×b3! 9 Bb5 Kc5 (△ 10…R×b5) 10 Be8 Rb8 11 Bd7 Kd6 12 Bf5 Ke5 13 Bd7 g6 White resigned.

Chapter Twelve

12/1. Shmirin-Novikov, USSR 1982

1…f5! 2 a5 (White has nothing else) **2…Qg7+!**

White resigned because his queen will either be lost (3 Kf3 Qb7+) or traded.

12/2. Matokhin-G. Kuzmin, USSR 1970

1…f6+! 2 Kg4 (2 Q×f6 Qg3#) **2…Qg2+ 3 Qg3 f5+ 4 Kf4 e5+!**

White resigned in view of 5 de Qd2#.

12/3. L. van Vliet, 1888

1 Qb4!⊙ Qh1

1…Qd5 2 Qa4+ Kb6 3 Qb3+! Q×b3 4 b8Q+;

1…Qf3 2 Qa4+ Kb6 3 Qb3+!;

1…Qg2 2 Qa3+ Kb6 3 Qb2+!

2 Qa3+ Kb6

Or 2…Kb5 3 Qb2+ Kc4 4 Ka7+–.

3 Qb2+ Kc7

If 3…Kc5, then 4 Ka7 Qh7 5 Qb6+ and 6 Ka6+–. In case of 3…Ka6, the following familiar tactical device decides: 4 Qa2+ Kb6 5 Qb1+!. When the black king is on c7, the same idea of winning the queen works diagonally.

4 Qh2+!! Q×h2 5 b8Q+.

12/4. L. Kubbel, 1936

1 Qh1+! (1 Qg1? Qc7!) **1…Kg4 2 Qe4+ Kh3 3 Qe6! Qc7(f8) 4 Qd6!**+–.

12/5. L. Kubbel, 1929

Both 1 Qg1? Ke4 and 1 Qf1+? Ke4 2 Qc4+ Kf3 3 Qd3+ Kf4! (3…Kf2? 4 Qe3+ Kf1 5 Kg3+–) 4 Qe2 e4 give nothing.

1 Qg2! (△ 2 Qg4#) **1…f5**

1…e4 is quite bad: 2 Qg3+ Kf5 3 Qg5#.

2 Qe2! (△ 3 Qe3#)

Rather than 2 Qf1+? Ke4 3 Qc4+ Kf3 4 Qd3+ Kf2! (4…Kf4? 5 Qe3#) 5 Qe3+ Kf1, and 6 Kg3?? loses to 6…f4+.

2…e4 3 Qe1! (△ 4 Qg3#) **3…Ke5 4 d4+!** and 5 Q×a5.

Chasing after the king has suddenly resulted in catching the queen.

12/6. Ermolin-Petriaev, USSR 1971*

After 1 Kg1? Qe5 White is in serious trouble. A nice combination helps him.

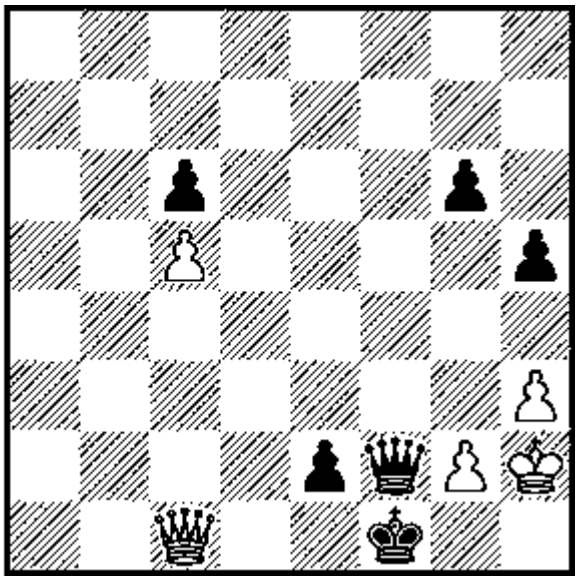
1 Qf2!! Q×f2 (1…ef – stalemate) **2 g3+** and Black cannot avoid stalemate.

12/7. Szily-Ozsváth, Hungary ch 1954

The game continued: 1…Qc1? 2 Qf7+ Ke1 (if 2…Ke2 3 Q×g6 Qf4+ 4 Kg1 Qe5, then 5 Qd6!=, rather than 5 Q×c6? Qa1+ 6 Kh2 Kf2 with an inevitable mate) 3 Q×g6 Qf4+ 4 Kg1 Qf1+ 5 Kh2 Qc4 6 Q×c6 e3 7 Qd6, and the game is equal.

Why did Black not push his passed pawn? Presumably, he calculated the line **1…e3! 2 Qc4+** (2

Qf7+ Qf2 3 Q×g6 Qf4+ 4 Kh1 e2 5 Qd3 Kf2 6 Qc2 Qg5–+) **2…e2 3 Qf4+ Qf2 4 Qc1+**



…and came to the conclusion that it leads to perpetual check: 4…e1Q 5 Qc4+ Qfe2 6 Qf4+ Q1f2 7 Qc1+, etc.

However, underpromotion to a knight could prevent the perpetual check: **4…e1N!! 5 Qc4+ Qe2 6 Qf4+ Nf3+! 7 Q×f3+ Q×f3 8 gf Kf2**–+.

12/8. Ehlvest-Topalov, Novgorod 1995

After 1…Kc8?? 2 Qg4+ Kc7, a draw was agreed, in view of 3 Qd1=.

1…Kc7!

1…Kc6 is less precise: after 2 Qa4+ he should go back (2…Kb6 3 Qb4+ Kc7!) because 2…Kc5? 3 Qa5+ Kc6 4 Qa8+ leads to perpetual check. The outcome of the complicated duel between the king and queen in the line 2…Kc7 3 Qa7+ Kd8 4 Qb6+ Ke7 5 Qf6+ Kd7 is hard to foresee.

2 Qe7+ (2 Qc3+ Kd8) **2…Kc6 3 Qe8+ Kc5 4 Qf8+ Kd4**–+

The king has broken through into the opposite camp where it can both find a refuge from checks and support its passed pawn.

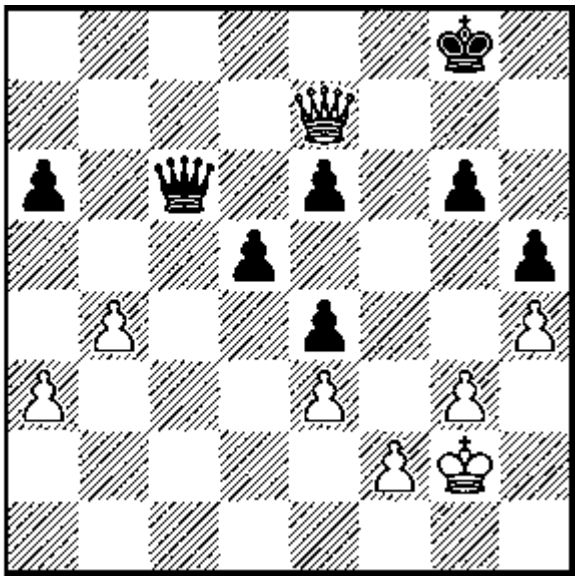
12/9. Kharitonov-Ivanchuk, Frunze 1988

1 Qe7!+–

White has completely tied down his opponent, having deprived the black queen of the e8- and d7-squares. Now he plans to combine threats to the king with an advance of his queenside pawns.

1…h5 (otherwise g3-g4 and h4-h5-h6) 2 Kg2 Qc8 (2…Kh8 3 Qf8+ Kh7 4 Qf7+ Kh6 5 Qg8 Qc3 6 Q×e6) 3 b4 Qc6 4 a3⊙

16-97



B

4…Qc8 5 a4 Qc6 6 Qf6! Kh7 (6…Qe8 7 b5) 7 Qf7+ Kh6 8 Qg8 Qc3 9 b5 Qf6 10 Kg1?!

Quicker progress could be achieved with 10 ba Qf3+ 11 Kg1 Qd1+ 12 Kh2.

10…ab 11 ab d4 12 ed Q×d4 13 Q×e6 Qd1+ 14 Kh2 Qf3

If 14…Qe2, White does not play 15 Qb6 Kh7! (△ 16…e3). He has 15 Qf6! Kh7 16 b6!, and if 16…e3, then 17 Qe7+.

15 Qb6 Black resigned.

12/10. Adorján-Orsó, Hungary ch, Budapest 1977

1 Qd3!

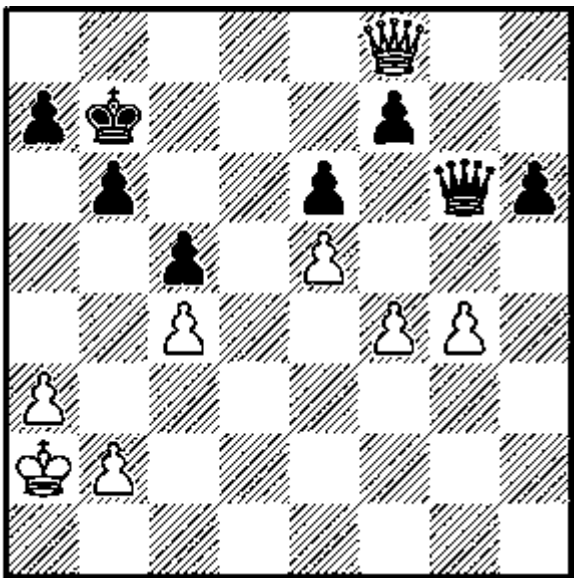
A multipurpose move, White threatens a queen invasion to h7 and prevents …b6-b5.

1…Qh1!

The preventive move 1…Qa4 allows a pawn advance on the kingside: 2 g4 and 3 f5.

2 Qh7 Q×h5 3 Q×g7 Qg6 4 Qf8+ Kb7 5 g4!

16-98



B?

5…h5?!

He cannot play 5…Qd3? in view of 6 Q×f7+ Ka6 7 Q×e6. If 5…Q×g4?, then 6 Q×f7+ Ka6 (6…Kb8 7 Qf8+ and 8 Q×h6+–) 7 Qf8! h5 (7…Qh3 8 Qc8+ Ka5 9 Qd7 a6 10 f5! ef 11 e6+–) 8 Qc8+ Ka5 9 Qd7 Ka6 10 b4! cb 11 ab (△ Qc8#), and the king escapes from the checks to a4.

The move 5…a5!? is harder to refute. Both 6 f5? ef 7 Qe7+ Kc6(c8) 8 Qe8+ Kc7! (the queen cannot go to d7) and 6 Qe7+? Ka6 7 Qd7 (7 f5 Q×g4) 7…Qe4! are useless. A stronger alternative is 6 Qe8!?, with the idea 7 f5 ef 8 Qd7+. For example, 6…Q×g4? 7 Q×f7+ Ka6 8 Qf8! Qf3!? 9 Qc8+ (9 Q×h6? a4=) 9…Ka7 10 Qd7+! Ka6 11 Q×e6 Q×f4 (11…a4 12 Qd5) 12 Qd5 Ka7 13 e6+–.

However, Black has a better continuation: 6…Kc7! 7 Qe7+ Kc8(c6) 8 Qd6 Kb7 9 Qd7+ Ka6 10 Qe8 (10 f5 Q×g4=) 10…Qe4!=.

Another drawing possibility existed as well: 5…Ka6!? 6 Qc8+ Ka5 7 Qb7 (7 Qd7 Ka6 8 f5 Q×g4=) 7…a6 8 Qf3 Qc2=.

So we see that White could not win against accurate defense. However his plan is absolutely correct because Black is now faced with serious problems.

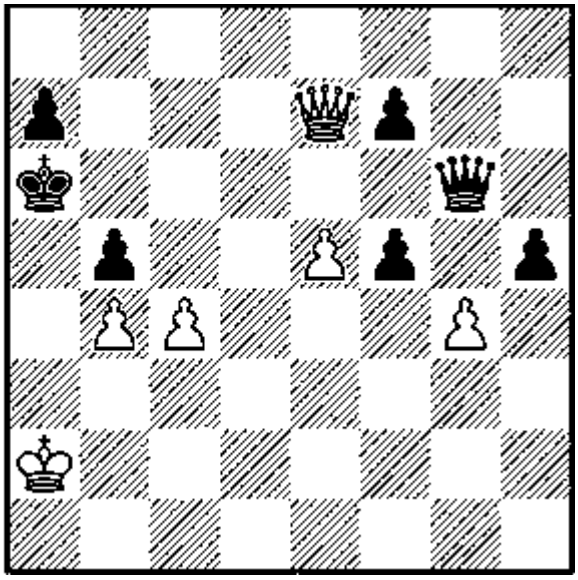
6 f5! ef 7 Qe7+ Ka6

Or 7…Kc6 8 Qe8+ Kc7 9 gh! Q×h5 10 e6+–.

8 b4! cb 9 ab b5 (his only defense against a mate)

16-99

W?



Unfortunately, White went astray at the last moment. After 10 Qd6+? Kb7!, there was no win. The remainder of the game was 11 Qd7+ Kb8 12 Q×b5+ Kc8 13 Qe8+ Kc7 14 Qe7+ Kc8 15 Qe8+ Kc7 16 Qe7+ Kc8 17 g5 f4 18 Qe8+ Kc7 19 Qe7+ Kc8 20 Qc5+ Kb7 21 Qd5+ Kb8 22 Ka3 Q×g5 23 Qd6+ Kc8 Draw agreed.

The winning continuation was **10 e6!! Q×g4** (10…fe 11 Qd7!; 10…Q×e6 11 Q×e6+ fe 12 gh f4 13 h6 f3 14 h7 f2 15 h8Q f1Q 16 Qc8+ Kb6 17 c5#) **11 Qd6+** (11 cb+ Kb6 12 Qc5+ Kb7 13 Qd5+ Kb8 14 efi was equivalent) **11…Kb7 12 Qd7+ Kb8** (otherwise he will be mated) **13 Q×b5+ Kc7 14 Qd7+ Kb8 15 Qd8+ Kb7 16 Qd5+ Kc7 17 ef**+–.

Chapter Thirteen

13/1. L. Prokeš, 1938

1 Rh8? loses after 1…Qa3+ 2 Kb7 Qb2+ 3 Ka7 Qb6+! (but surely not 3…Q×h8? 4 c8Q+ Q×c8 stalemate) 4 Ka8 Q×c7 5 Rh5+ Kc4 6 Rh4+ Kc3 7 Rh3+ Kc2, and the checks are exhausted.

1 Rd8! Qh6+ 2 Kb7 Qb6+ 3 Ka8! Q×c7 4 Rd5+ Kb6

The king can be forced to go to the sixth rank only when the white rook is on the d-file (there is no use in 4…Kc4 5 Rd4+ etc.).

5 Rb5+ (5 Rd6+ is also good) **5…Ka6 6 Rb6+!** with stalemate or perpetual check.

13/2. A. Chéron, 1950

After 1 Qa8? Kb4, White cannot prevent the Guretzky-Cornitz drawing position (diagram 13-24). For example, 2 Qf8 (2 Qa6 Rc4+ 3 Kd5 b5=) 2…Kb3 3 Qb8 (3 Qf3+ Kb4 △ 4…Rc4+ and 5…b5=; 3 Kd3 Rc3+ △ 4…b5=) 3…b5 4 Kd4 Rc4+.

The correct method is **1 Qb7!**, holding the black pawn on the sixth rank. After 1…Rg5, Chéron analyzed 2 Qd7+ Ka6 3 Qc8+. A quicker alternative is 2 Kd4! Rc5 (2…Rg4+ makes White's task easier because his king crosses the fifth rank immediately: 3 Ke5 Rg5+ 4 Kf6 Rc5 5 Ke6) 3 Qa8!, achieving the winning position from diagram 13-23.

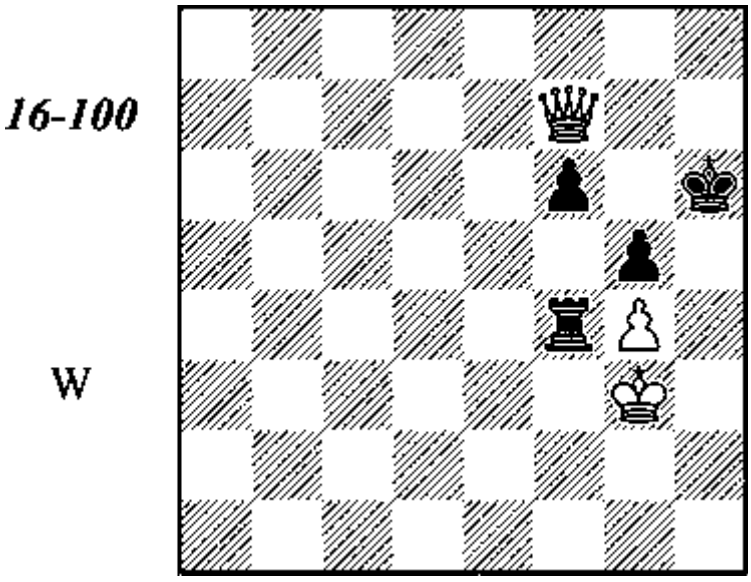
13/3. V. Khenkin, 1982

If White is on move, **1 Qh6+ Kg8 2 Qh3 Re1 3 Kh6 g5!** followed by 4…Re6+ leads to the Dedrle drawing position (diagram 13-32).

If Black is on move, all rook retreats lose: 1…Rf2? 2 Qh6+ Kg8 3 Qh4 Re2 4 Kh6+–, or 1…Rf3? 2 Qh6+ Kg8 3 Qh1! Re3 4 Kh6+–.

After **1…f6+! 2 Kh4**, 2…Rf3 is tempting, because Black, after the forced continuation 3 Qe7+ Kh6 4 g5+ fg+ 5 Q×g5+ Kh7, is close to the drawn Guretzky-Cornitz position (diagram 13-21): all he needs is to play Rf5 when the king is on the seventh or eighth rank. However, he fails to reach it: White plays 6 Qe7+ Kh6 7 Qe5! Kh7 8 Qc7+ Kh6 9 Kg4 Rf5 10 Qe7!⊙ Rh5 11 Qf8+ Kh7 12 Qf7+ Kh6 13 Qg8 Rg5+ 14 Kf4 Rf5+ 15 Ke4, forcing the black king ahead and achieving the winning position from diagram 13-23 (Dvoretsky).

2…g5+! 3 Kg3 Rf4 4 Qf7+ Kh6



His unfavorably placed king betrays White. 5 Qg8 Rf1 is useless. The king can break through to freedom only by **5 Kg2!?**, but after **5…R×g4+ 6 Kf3 Rf4+** (6…f5!? Dvoretsky) **7 Ke3 Rh4! 8 Q×f6+ Kh5 9 Qg7** (9 Qf7+ Kh6 △ 10…Rf4) **9…Rf4** the Guretzky-Cornitz drawing position (diagram 13-24) arises.

Summing up, Black holds no matter who is on move.

13/4. L. Katsnelson, 1971

1 Re6 Nc4+ 2 Kb5!

Both 2 Kb7? Rg7+ △ 3…Re7–+ and 2 Ka6? Rg6!–+ are inaccurate.

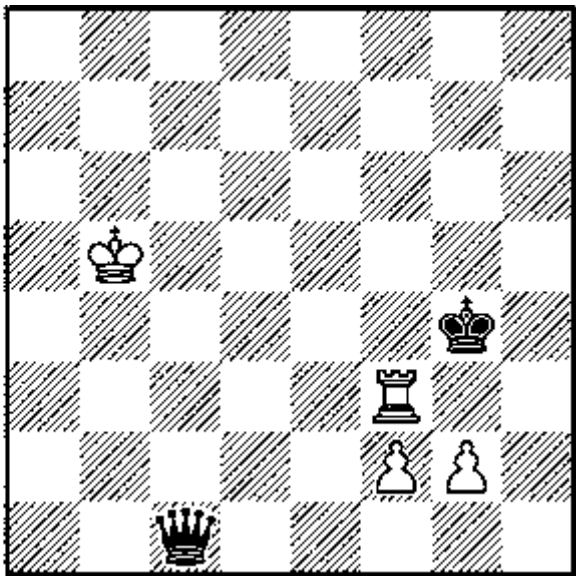
2…Ne5! 3 R×e5 Rg5! 4 Bf5! R×f5! 5 R×f5 e1Q 6 R×f8+ Kh7 7 Rf7+!

7 Rf3? is premature in view of 7…Qf1+ △ 8…Q×g2. He should decoy the king to the g-file first.

7…Kh6 8 Rf6+ Kh5 9 Rf5+ Kg4 10 Rf3 (the g2-pawn is indirectly protected) **10…Qc1**

16-101

W?



The outcome of the fight now depends on whether Black succeeds in stalemating the white king, putting him in zugzwang. This danger is quite real as the following analysis shows:

11 Ka4? Qb2 12 Ka5 Qb7 13 Ka4 Qb6 14 Ka3 Qb5 15 Ka2 Qb4 16 Ka1 Qd2 17 Kb1 Kg5! 18 Ka1 Qc2⊙–+.

11 Kb6? Qc4 12 Ka5 Qc5+ 13 Ka4 Qb6 etc.

11 Kb4! Qc6 12 Kb3 Qc5 13 Kb2 Qc4 14 Kb1 Kg5 (14…Qe2 15 Rg3+ with perpetual check: the king cannot step onto the e-file) **15 Kb2 Kh6 16 Rh3+!** (16 Kb1? Qf1+) **16…Kg6 17 Rf3!**=.

Chapter Fourteen

14/1. Beliavsky-Miles, Thessaloniki ol 1984

A draw is reached by force after **1…c2! 2 Ne3+ Kd2 3 B×c2 Rc8!**, and 4…Rc3= is inevitable, with a draw.

In the game, Black played 1…Rh8?!. Although the position remained drawn, the defense has become more complicated, and this eventually led to the decisive error.

2 Be4 Ke1 (2…Rh1!?) 3 Na3 (3 Ke3!?) 3…Kd1 (Karsten Müller recommended 3…Kd2 4 f5 Rh4!? or 4 Nc4+ Kd1!?) 4 f5 Rh7? (necessary was 4…Kc1 5 Kf4 Rf8 or 5…Kb2) 5 Kf4 Rf7 6 Ke5 – White has been able to coordinate his pieces and won easily.

14/2. H. Aloni, 1968

The active rook on the seventh rank ensures White's advantage. However, he must play energetically, otherwise Black limits the mobility of the rook with …Nf7.

The idea of the rook sacrifice on b7 comes instantly as we have seen this idea already; see diagrams 2-9 and 2-14. However, the immediate 1 R×b7? N×b7 2 a6 is refuted by 2…Nd6 3 a7 Nc4+ and 4…Nb6.

If 1 Kd4?!, then 1…Kd6 (1…Nf7? 2 Kc5 △ Kb6) 2 f5 Bg4 (2…Bf3), and 3 R×b7? N×b7 4 a6 is is still wrong, this time because of 4…c5+! 5 Ke4 (5 Ke3 Na5!) 5…Kc6! △ 6…Nd6+.

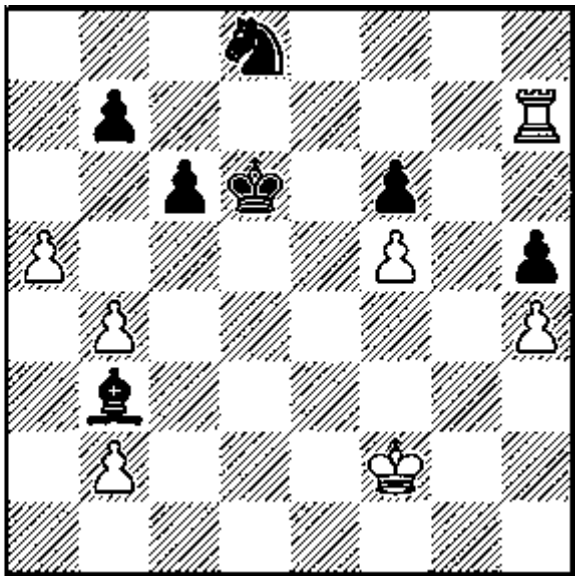
1 f5+! Kd6! (1…K×f5? 2 Rd7) **2 Kf2!!**

The rook sacrifice is still premature: 2 R×b7? N×b7 3 a6 Na5! 4 ba (4 a7 Nc4+) 4…Kc7. The subtle king move makes it inevitable. The chosen square for the king is determined by the necessity to control e2 and f3 (2 Kf4? Be2!).

2…Bb3

16-102

W?



3 R×b7!

The other pawn is less valuable: 3 R×h5? Nf7 4 Rh7 Ke7 △ 5…Kf8 or 5…Bc2.

3…Bc4 (3…N×b7 4 a6+–) **4 Rh7!?**

4 Ra7!? c5 5 a6 is also strong, for example 5…cb 6 Rb7! (rather than 6 Ra8 Nc6 7 a7 Bd5! and the pawn cannot be promoted) 6…Bd5 (6…N×b7 7 a7) 7 R×b4 or 7 Rb6+ with a decisive advantage.

4…Nf7

Both 4…Bf7 5 a6 Kc7 6 a7 Kb7 7 Rh8 and 4…Ke5 5 Rd7! are hopeless.

5 R×h5 (5 Ke3!?) **5…Ke5**

Or 5…Ke7 6 Rh7 Kf8 7 Ke3 Kg8 8 R×f7+–.

6 b3! Bb5 7 Rh7 Nd6 8 h5 N×f5 (8…K×f5 9 Rg7) **9 h6 Ke6 10 Rb7! N×h6 11 R×b5! cb 12 a6**+–.

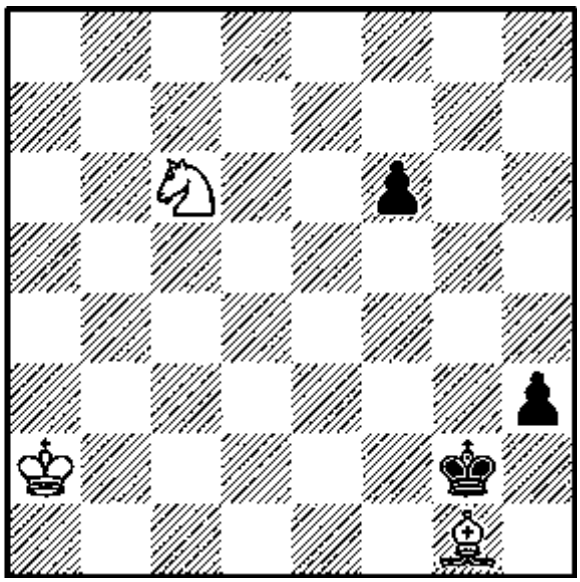
14/3. G. Nadareishvili, 1954

1 Bg1 Kg3 2 Nc6! Kg2

White survives after 2…f5 3 Nd4 Kg2 (3…f4 4 Ne2+) 4 Ne2 (rather than 4 N×f5? K×g1 5 Nd4 Kf2–+) 4…Kf1 (4…Kf3 5 Nd4+) 5 Nf4=.

16-103

W?



The black pawn will inevitably be promoted; White's only way to salvation is to reach the Karstedt position.

3 Bd4! h2 (3…f5 4 Be5=) **4 B×f6 h1Q 5 Bb2! Qh5 6 Nd4 Qa5+ 7 Kb1!** (rather than 7 Kb3? Kf2 8 Kc2 Qa2!–+) **7…Qa4 8 Ba1**=.

14/4. G. Kasparian, 1969

Materially, it is a draw, but White's pieces are divided and one can hardly see how he can avoid the loss of a piece:

1 Rg3? Qf4+ 2 Rg4 Qh6+ 3 Kg3 Qe3+ 4 Kh2 (4 Kg2 Qe2+) 4…Qf2+ 5 Rg2 Qh4+ 6 Kg1 Qe1+ and 7…Q×b1;

1 Rf3? Qh2+ 2 Rh3 Qf2+ 3 Kh5 (3 Rg3 Qf4+) 3…Qc5+ 4 Kh6 (4 Kh4 Qb4+; 4 Kg6 Qb6+) 4…Qc1+;

1 Kh3? Qc8+ 2 Kh4 Qf8!–+;

However, there is an unusual way to save the game:

1 Kg4! Qc8+ 2 Kf3!! (2 Kh5? Qc5+; 2 Kh4? Qf8!–+) **2…Qb7+ 3 Rd5!!**=

White's pieces cooperate now, a capture of any piece will cost Black the queen.

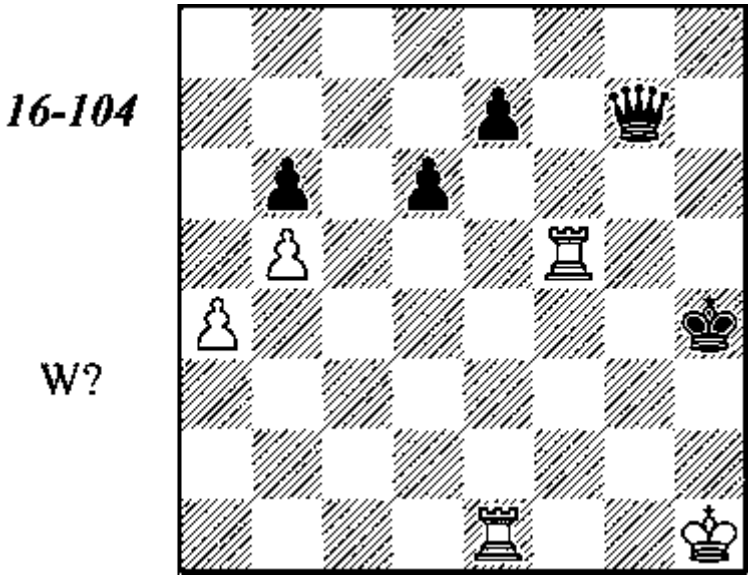
14/5. Yermolinsky-Kaidanov, USA ch, Long Beach 1993

The threat Rg5+ should be neutralized. Black played 1…Kg7? because he failed to see the killing reply: after 2 Rg5+ Kf8, White has 3 Rg6! with a decisive doubling of the rooks in the f-file. The game continued 3…e5 4 Rgf6 e4 5 R×f7+ Kg8 6 Re7 (having won a pawn, the rooks regroup for attacking another pawn) 6…Qd3 7 Rf4 e3 8 Rfe4 Qc2+ 9 Kh3 Qc8+ 10 g4 Qc1 11 R×e3 Qh1+ 12 Kg3 Qg1+ 13 Kf4 Qf2+ 14 Kg5 Qd2 15 Kg6 Black resigned.

The correct defense was **1…Qd7! 2 Rg5+ Kh7!**⩲ (rather than 2…Kh6? 3 Rf6+ Kh7 4 Rg4 e5 5 Rg5+–). White cannot win a pawn: if 3 Rf6, then 3…Qe7.

14/6. G. Zakhodiakin, 1967

1 g7! Qg6+ 2 Kh1 Q×g7 3 Rf4+ Kh5 4 Rf5+ Kh4 (if 4…Kh6, the same reply follows)



5 Ree5!! de 6 Rf2!+–

White picks up the queen for the rook and wins by means of the breakthrough a4-a5.

Inarkiev noticed that the quiet move 1 Kh1!? is also strong enough for a win, for example, 1…Qc3 (1…Qb3 2 Rf2+–) 2 Re2 Kh5 3 Rg2 Qe1+ 4 Kh2 Qe5+ 5 Kg1 Qd4+ 6 Rff2+–.

Chapter Fifteen

15/1. N. Grigoriev, 1932

1 Kf5!

Shouldering! 1 h5? is wrong in view of 1…Kg4 2 h3+ Kh4⊙. The same holds for both 1 h3? Kg3 2 h5 Kh4⊙= and 1 Kg5? Kg2 2 h5 Kh3⊙ 3 Kg6 Kg4!=.

1…Kg2 2 h5 Kh3 (if 2…Kf3, the same reply follows) **3 Kg5!**⊙ **K×h2 4 Kg6**+–.

15/2. B. Breider, 1950

How to fight against the distant passed pawn (a4)? The knights cannot cross the h3-c8 diagonal, which will be occupied by the black bishop, while the king is placed hopelessly far away. However, it comes to the opposite wing in time, utilizing the Réti idea.

1 Nf5! Bc8 2 Kg3! B×f5

If 2…d3, White has 3 Ne6! (rather than 3 Kf2? B×f5–+ or 3 Ne3? a3–+) 3…d2 (3…B×e6 4 Nd4! Bc8 5 Kf2=; 3…a3 4 Ned4=) 4 Ne3 B×e6 5 Kf2 a3 6 Ke2 a2 7 Nc2=. Another resource is 3 Nd6! d2 4 Ne4!, forcing 4…d1N!=.

3 Kf4! Bc8 4 Ne6! B×e6 (4…d3 5 Ke3 B×e6 6 K×d3=) **5 Ke5! Bc8 6 K×d4**=.

15/3. N. Rezvov, V. Chernous, 1991

1 Kc7!

After 1 Ne7? Bf4+ 2 Kb7 Kf6, an attempt to bring the king to h1 fails because of shouldering: 3 Kc6 Ke5! 4 Kc5 Bg5 5 Nd5 h5 with a winning endgame.

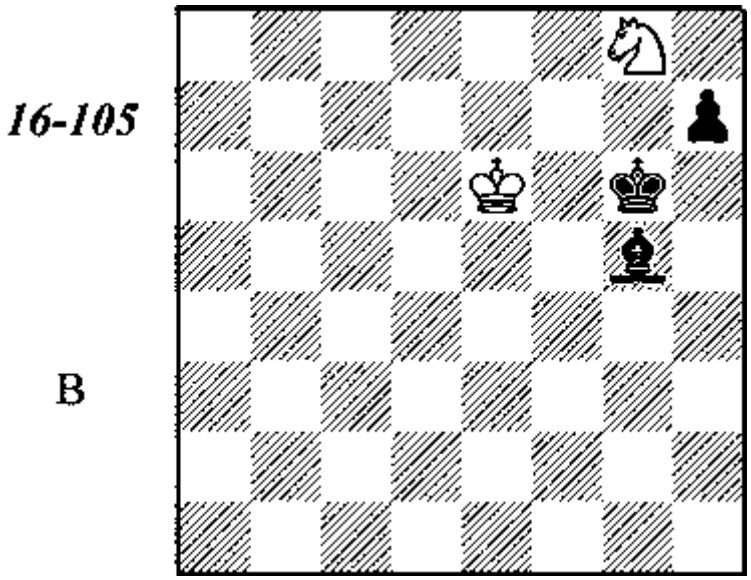
1…Bg5!

The line 1…Bf4+ 2 Kc6 Kg6 3 Kd5 Kf5 4 Nf6! h6 5 Kd4 Be5+ 6 Ke3= is not dangerous for White.

2 Kd6 Kg6

3 Ke5? loses now to 3…Kh5! 4 Kf5 Kh4 5 Ke4 Kg4!.

3 Ke6!!⊙



White saves himself by chasing two birds at once. In case of 3…h5 4 Ke5, his king arrives at h1 safely.

3…Kh5

But now he runs in the opposite direction.

4 Kf7! Kg4 5 Nh6+! B×h6 6 Kg8=.

15/4. O. Pervakov, 1991

The king must hasten to help the b6-pawn.

1 Kg1!!

We have already mentioned that the laws of Euclidean geometry are not valid on the chessboard: the king's path to c5 along the fractured line (via g1) is by no means longer than the direct route via g3.

In case of 1 Kg3? Bd5 (△ 2…Kb7) 2 B×a6 (2 Nc8 Kb7 3 Bg4 a5 4 Kf4 a4=) 2…Bb7 3 Bc4! Bh1!, Black holds. For example, 4 Nc8 (or 4 Kh2 Bf3! 5 Kg3 Bh1!) 4…Kb7 5 Be6 Ka6! 6 Kf4 Bb7 7 Bc4+ (7 Ke5 B×c8) 7…Ka5=.

The cunning concept behind White's initial move is becoming clear: the black bishop is now denied the important h1-square.

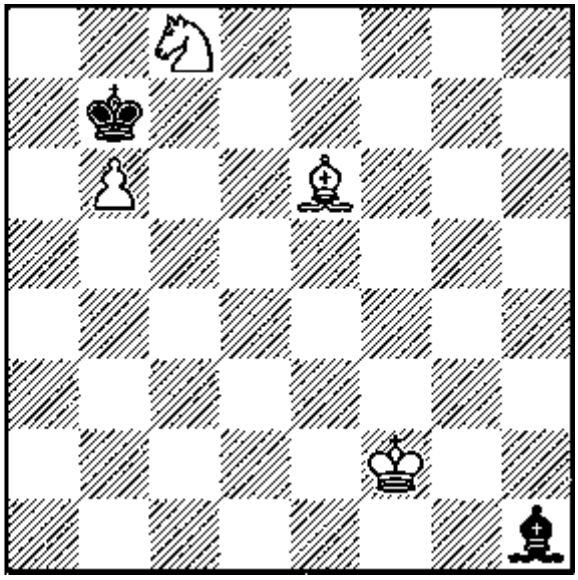
1…Bd5

1…a5 2 Nb5 is absolutely bad. If 1…Kb8 2 Kf2 a5, then the simplest reply is 3 Ke3, but 3 Nb5 Bd5 (3…Ba6 4 Nd6) 4 Nc3 Bb3 5 Bf3 a4 6 Nb1 Be6 7 Ke3 Bc8 8 Kd4 is also playable.

2 B×a6 Bb7 3 Bc4! (3 Bd3 Bd5!) **3…Bf3** (3…Be4 4 Nb5!+–) **4 Kf2** (the crucial tempo!) **4…Bh1 5 Be6** (or 5 Nc8 Kb7 6 Be6) **5…Kb7 6 Nc8**

16-106

B



6…Ka6

If 6…Kc6!? (hoping for 7 Ke3? Kc5 △ 8…Bb7=), then 7 Bg4! Kc5 8 Bf3 B×f3 9 K×f3 Kc6 10 Ke4 Kb7 11 Kd5 K×c8 12 Kc6 Kb8 13 b7+–.

7 Ke3 Bb7 8 Bc4+! Ka5 9 Kd4 B×c8 10 Kc5

The rest is simple. The king goes to c7 and Black loses because the a6-c8 diagonal is too short.

10…Bb7 11 Bb5 Bc8 12 Kc6 Kb4 (12…Bd7+ 13 Kc7 Bc8 14 Bf1⊙) **13 Bf1 Bg4 14 Bg2 Bc8 15 Kc7 Kc5 16 Bf1**⊙+–.

15/5. P. Benko, 1981

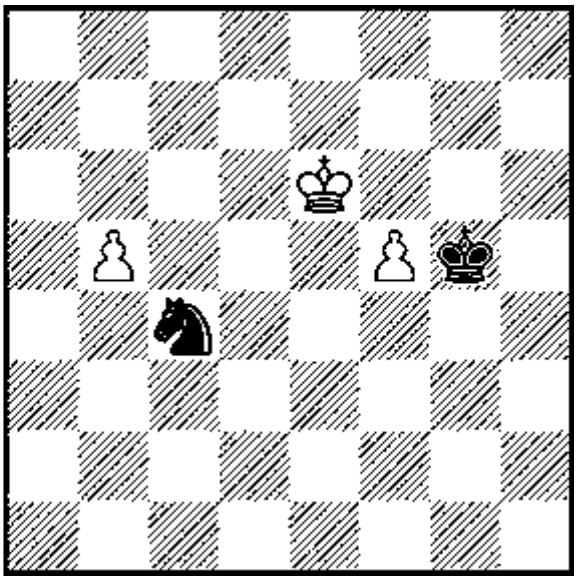
1 Kb6!!

1 b6? Nf3(g4) 2 b7 Ne5 leads to an immediate draw. Therefore White applies sharper tactics; his king will fight on two fronts simultaneously, supporting both passed pawns.

1…Ng4! (1…K×f5 2 Kc7+–) **2 Kc7! Ne3!** (2…Nf6 3 Kc6+–) **3 Kd7!** (rather than 3 Kd6? K×f5=) **3…Nc4** (3…Nd5 4 Kd6 Nb6 5 Ke6+–) **4 Ke6**

16-107

B



This position resembles the ending Svidler-Anand (diagram 15-13), does it not? But while in that case the fight was over when the king joined the f-pawn, here it only enters the most crucial phase.

4…Nb6 5 f6 Kg6 6 Ke7!

6 f7? is not correct: after 6…Kg7 7 Ke7 Nd5+!, there is no win. Therefore White triangulates to cede Black the turn to move.

6…Nd5+ 7 Kd6! Nb6 (7…N×f6 8 b6+–) **8 Ke6!⊙ Kh7**

A weaker reply is 8…Nc8 9 f7 Kg7 10 Kd7 Nb6+ 11 Ke8+–, while now immediate attempts to promote the f-pawn will fail. So the king first goes to another wing and only then returns to the kingside.

9 Ke7! Nd5+ 10 Kd6 Nb6 11 Kc6! Nc4 12 Kd7! Kg6 (12…Nb6+ 13 Ke8!+–) **13 Ke7!** (13 Ke6? Nb6) **13…Ne5** (13…Nb6 14 f7+–) **14 b6**+– (or 14 Ke6+–)

Generally, a knight is a faster runner than the king, but one can get the opposite impression from this ending.

15/6. Yudasin-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee cm(3) 1994

A winning line was **1 Rc8+! Kg7 2 b5 Kf6 3 Re8!** (cutting the king off), and one of the pawns promotes: 3…Rb3 4 d6, or 3…Rd3 4 b6.

The zwischenschach is necessary: after the immediate 1 b5?, Black holds by means of 1…Kf8!.

Yudasin's 1 d6? was also weak: 1…Kg7! 2 b5 Kf6 3 d7+ Ke7 4 Rd6 Kd8 led to a draw.

15/7. H. Rinck, 1906

1 f6 R×e2

Both 1…Kb5 2 Rh8 Rd7 3 Re8 and 1…Rd4 2 Re7 Re4 3 Re8 are hopeless. But now 2 Rh8? Rf2 3 Rf8 Kb6 4 f7 Kb7 5 Kc4 Rf5= does nothing. An interference decides in White's favor.

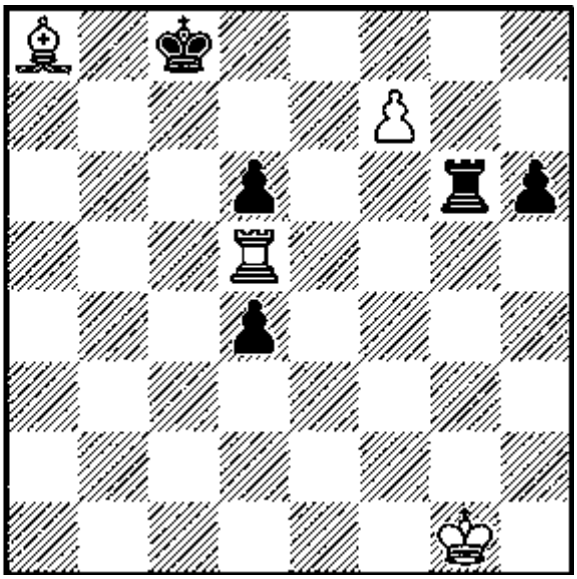
2 Rh5+! Kb6 3 Rf5!+–.

15/8. A. Maksimovskikh, 1977

Simple ideas do not work: 1 K×g2? R×g6+ 2 Kh3 Rf6 3 R×d6 R×f7=, or 1 f8Q+? R×f8 2 K×g2 Rf6=.

1 Kh2! g1Q+! 2 K×g1 R×g6+

16-108



W?

3 Rg5!! R×g5+ (3…Rf6 4 Rg8+) **4 Bg2! Rf5 5 Bh3 Kd8 6 B×f5 Ke7 7 Bg6!**+–

Rather than 7 Be6? h5=. The bishop protects its own pawn and holds the h6-pawn along the same h5-e8 diagonal, while the king will take care of Black's central pawns.

15/9. H. Mattison, 1927

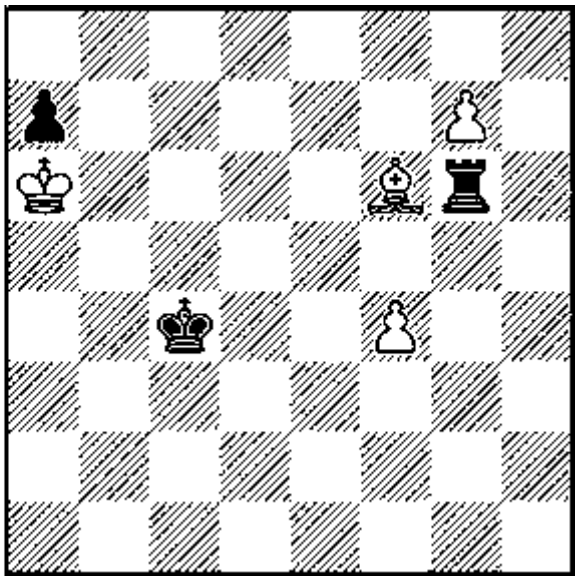
1 Be5!

Both 1 f5? Kd5 2 f6 Ke6 △ 3…Rf4= and 1 g7? Re8 2 f5 Kd5 3 K×a7 Kd6 4 Bf6 Kd7 △ …Rg8, …Ke8-f7= are incorrect.

1…Re2 2 g7 Rg2 3 Bf6 (4 Bg5 is threatened) **3…Rg6**

16-109

W?



4 Kb7!!

He cannot lose time capturing the pawn: 4 K×a7? Kd5 5 f5 Rg2 6 Kb8 Kd6! 7 Kc8 Ra2! 8 Kb7 Rg2=. 4 Ka5? Kd5 5 f5 Rg2 6 Ka6 Kd6= is also useless.

4…Kd5 5 f5 Rg2 6 Kc8!

The king should leave the seventh rank. White is not afraid of 6…Kd6 7 Kd8+–. An advance of the a-pawn does not bother him either: 6…a5 7 Kd8 a4 8 Ke7 a3 (8…Ke4 9 Ke6) 9 Ba1 a2 10 f6+–.

6…Ke4 7 Bg5! R×g5 8 f6+–

If the king is on c7, the bishop sacrifice does not work: 8…Kf5 9 f7 R×g7–+.

15/10. G. Zakhodiakin, 1930

1 Rg2+? Kh6 2 Kf7 Nf6! 3 Rg6+ Kh5 4 R×f6 Kg4 5 f5 Kg5 leads to a draw.

1 Ra6! Kg8

1…Nf8 2 f5 Kg8 (2…Nh7 3 Rg6#) 3 Ra8 Bg7 4 f6+–.

2 Ra8+! Kg7 3 R×h8! K×h8 4 Kf7⊙+–.

15/11. M. Liburkin, 1947

1 e6 a4 2 Kd1!

After 2 Kc3? a3, White is in a zugzwang: 3 Kb3 (3 Kc2 Bh7) 3…Bh7 4 e7 Bg8+ 5 K×a3 Bf7=. The same zugzwang results from 2 Kc1? a3 (3 Kb1 Bh7=).

2…a3 3 Kc1!⊙ **Kh7 4 Kb1**

Only now, when the black king has deprived its own bishop of the h7-square, may White move his king closer to the pawn. Equally good is 4 Kc2 Kh6 5 Kc3⊙+–.

4…Kh6 5 Ka1!⊙ **a2 6 Kb2!**⊙ **Kh7 7 K×a2**+–.

15/12. N. Grigoriev, 1937

1 Rf5!!

A deep and a difficult introduction; White foresees the reciprocal zugzwang position that soon arises.

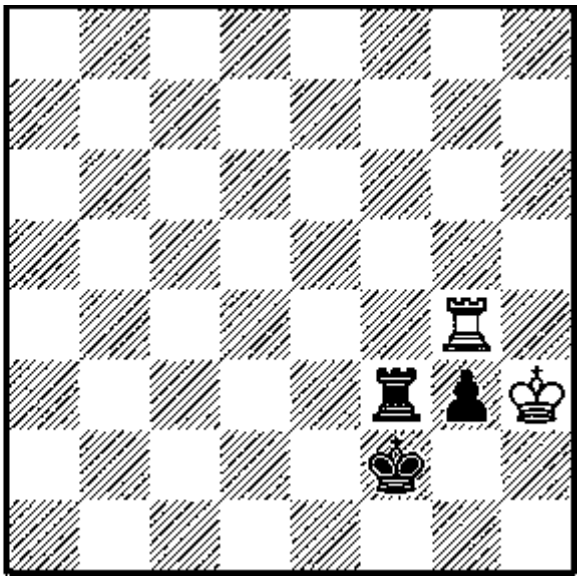
1…g3

1…Kc3 2 Rg5 Rc4 3 Kf7 Kd3 4 Kg6 Ke3 5 Kh5 Kf3 6 Kh4 Rf4 7 Ra5 g3+ 8 Kh3=.

2 Rg5 Rc3 3 Kf7 Kc2 4 Kg6 Kd2 5 Kh5 Ke2 6 Kh4 Kf2 7 Kh3 Rf3 (the threat is 8…Rf8–+) **8 Rg4!**

16-110

B



The aforementioned zugzwang position! If White were on move he would be lost.

8…Rf8 (8…Ra3 9 Rg8 Rf3 10 Rg4!) **9 Rf4+! R×f4** stalemate.

After 1 Rf4? g3 2 Rg4 Rc3 3 Kf7 Kc2 4 Kg6 Kd2 5 Kh5 Ke2 6 Kh4 Kf2 7 Kh3 Rf3, it was White who would be in zugzwang: 8 Rg5 Rf8–+ or 8 Ra4 g2+.

Also bad is 1 Rg7? Rc4, because the king can go neither to f7 nor e7 and will be cut off from the pawn: 2 Rg5 Rf4!–+ or 2 Kd7 Re4! 3 Kd6 Kc3 4 Kd5 Kd3–+. 1 Rf1? loses to 1…g3 2 Rg1 (2 Kf7 Rc1) …Rc3 3 Kf7 Kc2 4 Kg6 Kd2 5 Kg5 Ke2 6 Kh4 Kf2.

15/13. O. Duras, 1906

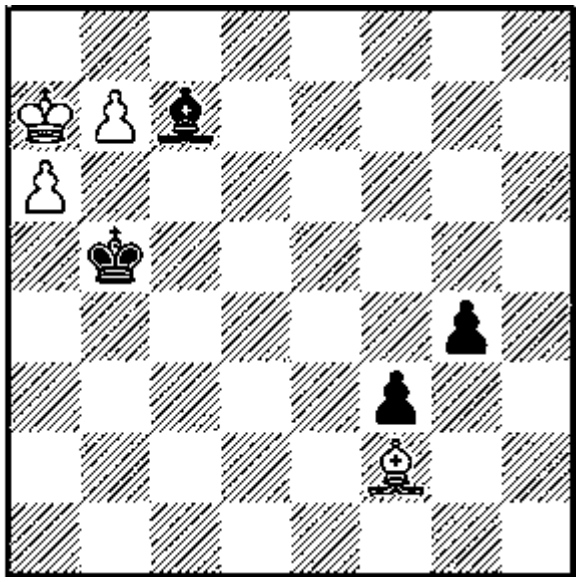
1 Ba3! (2 Bc5 is threatened) **1…Kc4 2 Be7! f3 3 Bd8! B×h2** (3…f2 4 B×c7 f1Q 5 b8Q+–) **4 Bb6**

The bishop has successfully stopped the f-pawn, but Black has also succeeded in stopping White's pawns.

4…Kb5 (4…g4 5 a6 Kb5 leads to a transposition of moves) **5 a6 g4 6 Bf2 Bc7**

16-111

W?



7 b8Q+! B×b8+ 8 Kb7! Ka5

The black bishop cannot be moved. To put Black in zugzwang, White needs to deprive the black king of the a5-square.

9 Bh4 (or 9 Bg3) **9…Kb5 10 Be1⊙ g3 11 B×g3 B×g3** (11…Ka5 12 Bh4 Kb5 13 Be1⊙) **12 a7 f2 13 a8Q f1Q 14 Qa6+**, and the black queen is lost.

15/14. N. Riabinin, E. Markov, 1993

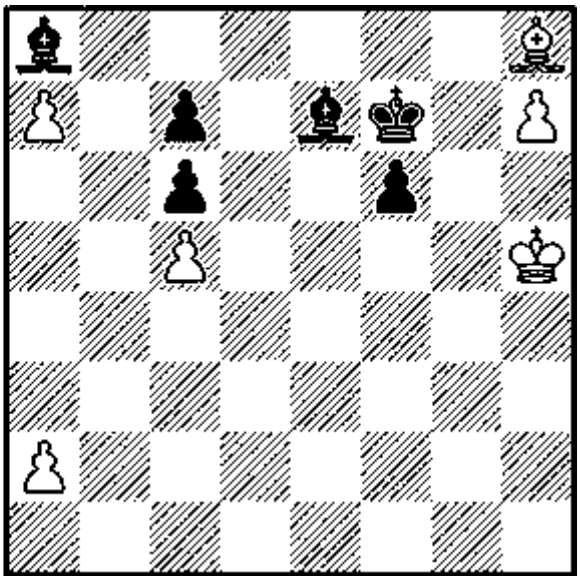
White should first completely tie down his opponent. Neither 1 a7? c5 nor 1 c4? Be6+ is strong

enough.

1 h6! f6! 2 h7 Kf7 3 c4! Be6+ 4 Kh5 Bc8 (4…Bc5? 5 B×f6+–) **5 a7 Bb7 6 c5! Ba8**

16-112

W?



White must now decide whether the a-pawn should make a single or a double step forward. Generally, it wants to go to a6 in order to deprive the light-square bishop of moves and to put Black in zugzwang. But deeper insight shows that White should get rid of his a7-pawn in order to free this square. This consideration explains the next move.

7 a3!!

7 a4? leads only to a draw: 7…Bb7 8 a5 Ba8 9 a6 Bf8 10 B×f6 Bg7=.

7…Bb7 8 a4 Ba8 9 a5 Bb7 10 a8Q! B×a8 11 a6⊙ Bf8□ (11…Bd8 12 Kh6 △ 13 Bg7+–) **12 B×f6 Bg7 13 B×g7 K×g7 14 Kg5 K×h7 15 Kf6 Kg8 16 Ke7 Kg7 17 Kd7(d8) Kf7 18 Kc8!**

White should not take the pawn: 18 K×c7? Ke7 19 Kb8 Kd7 20 K×a8 Kc8 21 Ka7 Kc7=.

18…Ke7 19 Kb8 Kd7 20 K×a8 Kc8 21 a7⊙+– (or 21 Ka7⊙+–).

15/15. J. Hašek, 1937

How to defend the position against the threat of the rook invasion along the h-file? 1 Re6? Rh8 2 R×e5 Kg6 is hopeless.

1 Kb1! Kg7 2 Rh6!! K×h6 3 Kc1 Kg5 4 Kd1 Rh8 5 Ke2 Rh2 6 Kf1 Rh1+ (6…R×g2 7 K×g2 Kh4 8 Kg1 Kh3 9 Kh1 g2+ 10 Kg1=) **7 Ke2**, and the rook cannot remain on the first rank in view of stalemate.

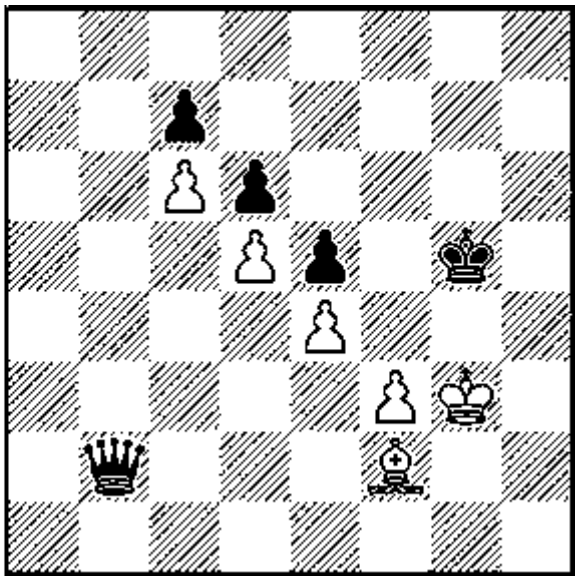
If Black plays 1…Rh8, then 2 Rf8!! R×f8 3 Kc1 leads to the same drawn position.

15/16. V. Chekhover, 1948

1 Bh2? loses to 1…a4 2 Kd2 a3 3 Kc2 Kg5 4 f3 (4 f4+ ef 5 e5 a2 6 Kb2 f3 7 ed f2–+) 4…a2 5 Kb2 g1Q 6 B×g1 Kf4 7 Bh2+ K×f3 8 K×a2 (8 B×e5 de 9 d6 h2–+) 8…K×e4! (rather than 8…Kg2? 9 B×e5=) 9 Kb3 K×d5. The solution is quite unexpected: White should build a fortified camp with a bishop against a queen!

1 f3! a4 2 Kf2!! a3 3 Kg3 a2 4 K×h3 a1Q 5 K×g2 Qb2+ (5…Kg5 6 Be3+ Kh4 7 Bf2+) **6 Bf2 Kg5 7 Kg3**

16-113



B

It becomes clear that a breakthrough on the kingside is a difficult matter. A king march to the queenside is senseless because the a7-square is not available: the white bishop controls it.

7…Qc1 8 Ba7! (the only square for the bishop) **7…Qf4+ 9 Kg2 Qd2+ 10 Kg3!**=.

15/17. Kozlov-Nevmerzhitsky, USSR 1964

A pawn breakthrough does not work: 1 h4? Kc7 2 g5 hg 3 hg (3 f6 gf 4 h5 g4 and the white king will be mated) 3…Kd6 4 f6 gf 5 g6 Ke7–+. 1 Kb1? Kc7 2 Kc2 Kd6 3 Kd3 Ke5 is quite bad; if 1 a3? Kc7 2 b4, then 2…cb 3 ab d3! 4 Kb2 a4! 5 h4 d2 6 Kc2 a3–+.

1 a4!! Kc7 2 b4!! cb (2…ab? even loses) **3 c5! Kd7 4 h4 Ke7 5 g5 hg 6 hg**=

The pawn barrier is built; the b- and d-pawns cannot promote without support from the king.

15/18. G. Zakhodiakin, 1949

The c-pawn cannot be halted in view of a decoying rook sacrifice, for example, 1 R×e7+? Kf6 2 Rc7 Rb8+ 3 Kd7 Rb7!–+.

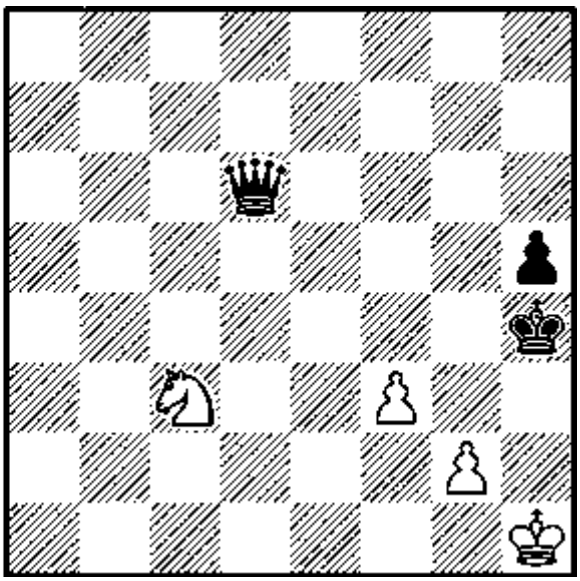
1 Rc7! Rb8+ 2 K×e7 Rb7! 3 R×b7 c1Q 4 Ke6+ Kg6 (4…Kg8 5 Rb8+ Kg7 6 Rb7+) **5 h5+! K×h5 6 Rg7 Qf1** (the threat is 7…Qf8–+) **7 Ke7!**=

The black king is padlocked and cannot be released.

15/19. A. Troitsky, 1910

1 Nc6 d3 2 N×a7!! d2 3 Nb5 d1Q 4 Nc3! Qd6+ 5 Kh1=

16-114



B

The knight inevitably goes to e4 and immobilizes the black king (5…Kg3? is impossible because of 6 Ne4+ and 7 N×d6).

15/20. E. Zakon, 1953

1 Nf3+! Kh1! 2 Ng1!! c1Q

Whichever knight Black takes, his c-pawn will be stopped: 2…K×g2 3 Ne2= or 2…K×g1 3 Nf4 Kf1 4 Nd3 Ke2 5 Nc1+ Kd2 6 Na2=.

3 Ne2 Qf1+ 4 Ngf4=.

15/21. F. Simkhovich, 1927

1…Rb1 and 1…Ra2 are threatened.

1 Bg4+ Kd6 2 Bf5! Ra2 3 N×a2!! ba 4 Kc1 a1Q+ 5 Bb1= (followed by Kc2-c1-c2).

15/22. C. de Feijter, 1941

1 g7 Re1+! (1…Re8 2 Bh7=) **2 Bd1!** (rather than 2 Ka2? Be5–+)

2…Re8 (2…R×d1+? 3 Kc2) **3 Bh5! Rg8 4 Bf7 R×g7 5 g6**=.

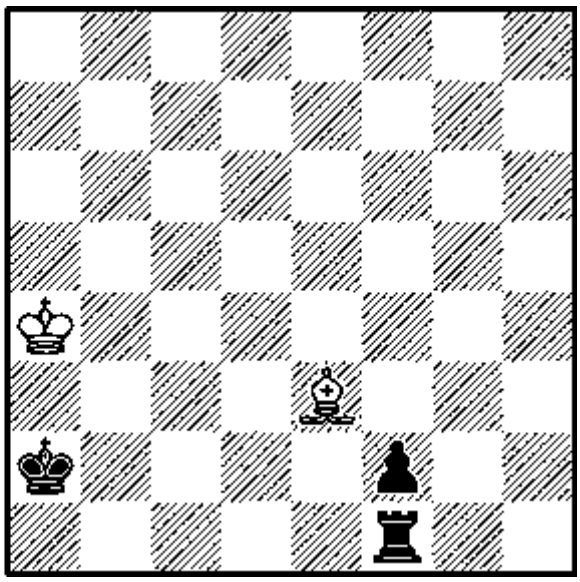
15/23. A. Troitsky, 1898

1 Rf4? (hoping for 1…Re1? 2 Rf3=) fails because of 1…Rd2! 2 Rf3 Rd4+ 3 Kb5 Rd5+.

1 Rh1! Re1 2 Rf1!! R×f1 3 B×e3

16-115

B



The black rook is condemned to protect the pawn and the king fails to come and help it.

3…Kb2 4 Kb4 Kc2 5 Kc4 Kd1 6 Kd3 Ke1 7 Bd2+ Kd1 8 Be3=.

15/24. F. Simkhovich, 1940

The defensive plan is uncomplicated: White must keep both black rooks in the crosshairs, not allowing them to leave the fourth rank. The only question is, from which square should the bishop begin the attack?

1 Bf5! Rc4 (1…Rg5 2 g7! K×f7 3 g8Q+ K×g8 4 Be6+ and 5 cd) **2 Be6! Kf8 3 Kh3 Rge4 4 Bd5! Ra4 5 Bc6! Rec4 6 Bb5! Kg7 7 Kh2! Rg4 8 Bd7!**= etc.

1 Bf3? loses to 1…Ra4! 2 Bd1 Kf8!⊙ 3 Kh3 Ra1! 4 B×g4 Rh1#.

15/25. L. Kubbel, 1926

1 Ng3? is bad in view of 1…K×h2! (1…Bg6+? 2 Ke3 K×h2 3 Kf2=) 2 N×h5 g3–+.

1 Ke3! K×h2 2 Kf2! (△ 3 Ng3=) **2…K×h1 3 Kg3⊙ Kg1** stalemate.

15/26. J. Møller, 1916

1 b3!+–

The bishop is fighting against the passed pawns on two diagonals and is therefore unable to get the upper hand (“pants”).

The inaccurate 1 d6? (or 1 h4?) allows Black to hold by locking in his own bishop for the sake of a stalemate: 1…b3! 2 h4 b4 3 h5 Ba4! 4 h6 b5=.

15/27. L. Prokeš, 1938

1 Ra2+! Kb7 2 Rg2!! fg 3 b5!⊙=

This combination resembles that from the Goldstein-Shakhnovich ending. Here, precisely as in that case, another defensive plan (to keep the rook behind the bishop pawn) fails, for example, 2 b5 Kb8 3 Ra6 Bd5 4 R×b6+ Kc7 5 Rf6 f2+ 6 Kf1 Bc4+ 8 Kg2 B×b5 and the king goes to the kingside. Unfortunately for White, the corner square (h1) is of the same color as the black bishop, so a rook sacrifice for two pawns does not help.

However, as Mrkalj has demonstrated, another solution exists: 2 b5 Kb8 3 Rc2! Be4 4 Rc3 Kb7 5 Kf1=. Black cannot make any progress: his king is confined to the queenside and the bishop is chained to defense of the f3-pawn.

15/28. J. Gunst, 1966

1 a4 a6!

It may seem that Black can take refuge in a stalemate defense but, in fact, White wins because he can subvert Black's plan with a series of precise moves.

2 Kf5! f6 3 Kg4! f5+ 4 Kh3! f4 5 Be2 f3 6 B×a6! f2 7 Kg2+–.

15/29. D. Przepiórka, 1926*

Here, as in the Zapata-Vaganian ending, finding the stalemate idea is not enough, a precise order of moves also needs to be chosen.

1 h4! gh

1…R×h4 2 R×h4 gh 3 Ke4 h3 4 Kf3 Kd7 5 Kf2 Bh2 6 Kf3=.

2 Rc4+! Kd7

Black may also try 2…Kb6!? 3 K×d6 h3, but White holds by means of 4 Rc1 (or 4 Rb4+! Ka5 5 Rb1) 4…h2 5 Rb1+! (rather than 5 Rh1? Rh5! 6 Ke6 Kc5 7 Kf6 Kd4 8 Kg6 Rh8 9 Kf5 Ke3 10 Kg4 Kf2–+) 5…Ka5 6 Rh1 Rh5! 7 Ke6 Kb4 8 Kf6 Kc3 9 Kg6 Rh8 10 Kg5 Kd3 11 Kf4! (11 Kg4? Ke3 12 Kg3 Rg8+ 13 Kh3 Kf2 14 R×h2+ Kf3–+) 11…Ke2 12 Kg3 Rg8+ 13 Kf4! Rg2 14 Ra1=.

3 R×h4!=

The try to avoid the 2…Kb6 line by means of a transposition of moves, 1 Rc4+? Kd7 2 h4, is refuted by 2…R×h4! 3 R×h4 gh 4 Ke4 h3 5 Kf3 Ke6 6 Kf2 Bh2! 7 Kf3 Kf5–+.

15/30. J. Fritz, 1965

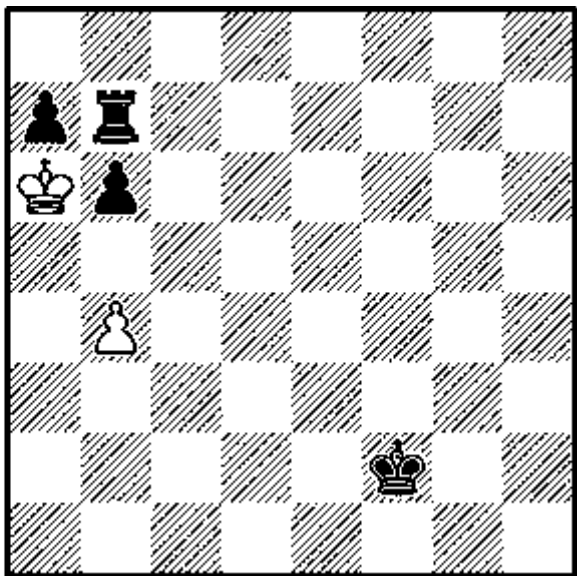
1 Ka6 Re7 2 Bb7!

2 b5? Ke3 3 Bb7 Kd4 4 K×a7 Kc5 is bad. But now 2…Ke3 is no longer effective: 3 K×a7 Re6 (3…b5 4 Kb6 Kd4 5 Bc6=) 4 Ka6 Kd4 5 Kb5 and 6 Bc6=.

2…R×b7 (with 3 K×b7? a5–+ in mind)

16-116

W?



3 b5!!

A nice quiet move! Any rook retreat along the seventh rank results in a stalemate, while 3…Ke3? even loses: 4 K×b7 Kd4 5 K×a7 Kc5 6 Ka6⊙.

3…Rb8 4 K×a7 Rh8 5 K×b6=.

15/31. D. Gurgenidze, 1980

1 f8Q? loses to 1…Rf6+ 2 Q×f6 ef 3 R×a4 c3 4 R×b4 c2 5 Rc4 c1Q 6 R×c1+ K×c1 7 Kg3 Kd2 8 K×h3 Ke3 9 Kg4 K×e4 10 h4 f5+ (or 10…Kd5). Only playing for stalemate promises chances of salvation.

1 Ra1+! Kd2 2 Rd1+!

A necessary zwischenschach. If 2…K×d1, then 3 f8Q Rf6+ 4 Ke3! R×f8 stalemate.

2…Kc2! 3 Rh1!!

This fantastic move is the point of White's idea. With the king on d2, the idea does not work: 2 Rh1? Rf6+ 3 Kg1 Ke2! 4 f8Q Rg6#.

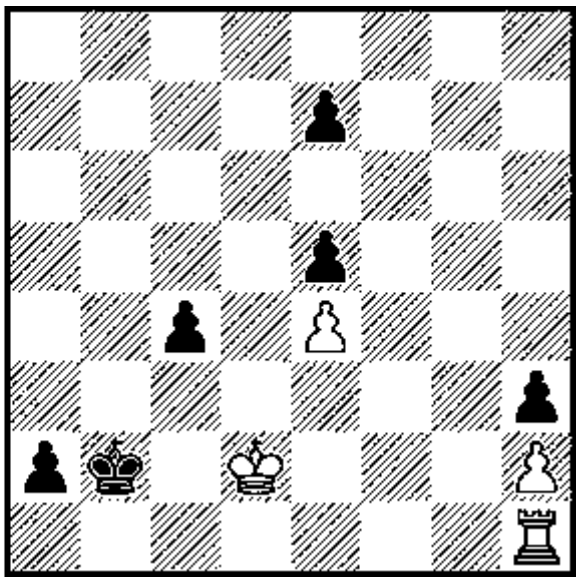
3….b3! 4 f8Q Rf6+ 5 Kg1! b2! (5…R×f8 stalemate) **6 Qb8 Rb6!**

The rook sacrifice is the only possibility of continuing to fight for the win. When the rook is on the f-file, the queen becomes a desperado, while no other file can be used for the rook in view of 7 Kf2.

7 Q×b6 b1Q+ 8 Q×b1+ K×b1 9 Kf2+ Kb2 10 Ke2 a3 11 Kd2 a2

16-117

W?



12 Ra1!

In case of 12 Rg1? a1Q 13 R×a1 K×a1 14 Kc3 Kb1 15 K×c4 Kc2, the black king has enough time to attack the h2-pawn: 16 Kd5 Kd3 17 K×e5 Ke3 18 Kf5 Kf3 (18…e6+ 19 Ke5 Kf3 is also possible) 19 e5 Kg2–+. Therefore White tries to arrange a stalemate again, but this time of the black king!

12…c3+ 13 Kd3 (13 Kd1 is equivalent) **13…e6**

There is no sense in 13…K×a1 14 Kc2 e6 15 Kc1 c2 16 K×c2 stalemate. After 13…c2 14 Kd2 c1Q+ 15 R×c1 a1Q 16 R×a1 K×a1, 17 Kc2? Ka2 18 Kc3 Kb1! 19 Kc4 Kc2–+ is bad (see the previous note). The king should be directed to the h-pawn: 17 Ke3! Kb2 18 Kf3 Kc3 19 Kg4 Kd3 20 K×h3 K×e4 21 Kg2! Kd3 22 Kf2! Kd2 23 Kf3 Kd3 24 Kf2 (a pendulum) 24…e4 25 Ke1 Ke3 26 h4 Kf4 27 Ke2=.

14 R×a2+

14 Rg1 c2 15 Kd2 a1Q 16 R×a1 K×a1 17 Kc1!= is also playable.

14…K×a2 15 Kc2!

It is important to gain the opposition (15 K×c3? Ka3 16 Kc4 Kb2–+).

15…Ka1 16 K×c3 (16 Kc1? c2 17 K×c2 Ka2–+) **16…Kb1 17 Kb3**=

The black king cannot leave the first rank because the reserve tempo (…e7-e6) is already spent.

15/32. J. Hašek, 1929

After 1 Kc5? f5 the position is drawn. A sudden bishop sacrifice decides.

1 Bf5!! gf 2 Kc5 f6 3 Kd6 Rg8 4 Ke6 Kf8 5 K×f6+–.

15/33. L. Kubbel, A. Troitsky, 1936

1 Qc1+ Ka4 2 Qc4! Qd8 3 Qa6+ Qa5 4 Nb6+! ab 5 Qc4!⊙+–.

15/34. H. Rinck, 1906

1 Qb1! (△ 2 Qb5+ Kd4 3 Qd5#) **1…Kd4 2 Qb3!! Q×e4+ 3 Kd6**

4 Qc3# is threatened. If 3…Qh1, then 4 Qc3+ Ke4 5 Qc6+.

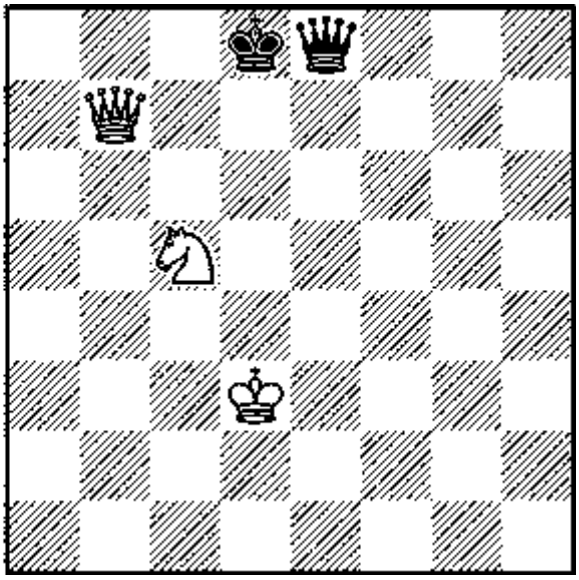
3…Qa8 4 Qe3+ Kc4 5 Qc3+ Kb5 6 Qb3+ Ka6 7 Qa4+ Kb7 8 Qb5+ Kc8 (8…Ka7 9 Kc7+–) **9 Qd7+ Kb8 10 Qc7#**.

15/35. H. Rinck, 1917

The initial attacking moves are easy to find.

1 Qc7+ Ka8 2 Qa5+ Kb7 (2…Kb8 3 Qb6+) **3 Nc5+ Kb8** (3…Kc6 4 Qa4+; 3…Kc8 4 Qa8+) **4 Qb6+ Kc8 5 Qb7+ Kd8**

16-118



W?

However, no success can be achieved by means of new checks. The solution of this position is zugzwang:

6 Kd2!!+–.

15/36. Zakharov-Petrushin, USSR 1973

The a-pawn cannot be stopped (for example, 1 Ne3? Nd4!–+ or 1 N×f7+? Kh7! 2 Ne3 Nd4!–+). White's chances lie only in a kingside attack.

Zakharov chose 1 Ne7?. He had 1…a2?? 2 Kh6!+– or 1…Kh7? 2 Nd5 (△ 3 Nf6+; 3 Nc3) in mind. However, Petrushin replied with 1…f6+! 2 K×f6 Kh7 3 Nf5 a2 4 Ng6 Nd4!. A careless 4…a1Q+? 5 Kf7 could lead to perpetual check (Nf8-g6+), while after the move actually played, White had to resign.

According to Gufeld's comments in *Chess Informant*, White could have achieved a draw by means of 1 Kf6 a2 2 K×f7 a1Q 3 Ng6+ Kh7 4 Nf8+. However, Nunn indicated that this is wrong – Black could win after 1…Kg8! 2 Ne7+ (2 Nh6+ Kf8) 2…Kh7 3 K×f7 a2 4 Nf5 Nc5! (4…a1Q? 5 Nd7= or 5 Ng6=) 5 Ng6 Nd7 6 Ke7 a1Q.

Grandmaster Nunn found a win for White in the initial position:

1 Kh6!! Kg8 (1…a2 2 Ne7! △ N×f7#; 1…f6 2 Nf7+ Kg8 3 Kg6 a2 4 h6 a1Q 5 h7+) **2 Nd7!** (the threat is 3 Ne7+ Kh8 4 Ne5) **2…f6** (2…Kh8 3 Nf6 △ Nd6+–) **3 Kg6 a2 4 Nh6+ Kh8 5 N×f6 a1Q 6 Nf7#**.

15/37. A. Troitsky, 1910

1 Rc2+

The line 1 Kd2? a1Q 2 Nd3+ Ka2! (rather than 2…Kb1? 3 Rc1+ Ka2 4 Nb4+ Kb2 5 R×a1 K×a1 6 Kc1⊙ a2 7 Nc2#) 3 Nc1+ Kb1! 4 Rb3+ Qb2+ only leads to a draw.

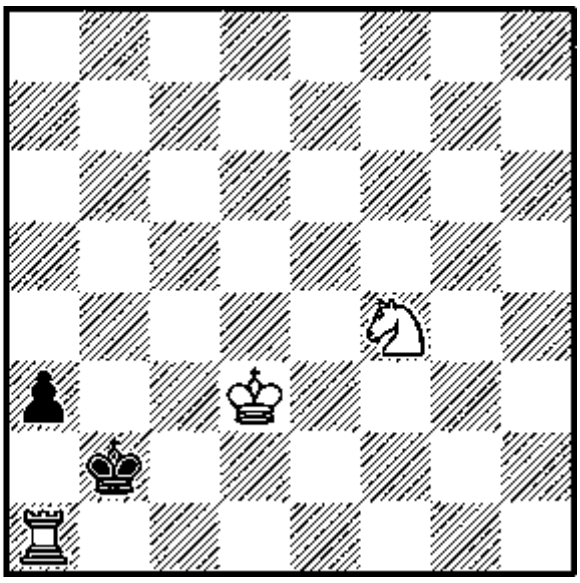
1…Kb3!

1…Kb1 is bad: 2 Ne2(d5) a1Q 3 Nc3+ Q×c3+ 4 K×c3 a2 5 Rb2+.

2 Rc1 a1Q! (2…Kb2 3 Kd2 a1Q 4 Nd3+ Ka2 5 Nb4+ Kb2 6 R×a1 K×a1 7 Kc1⊙+–) **3 R×a1 Kb2**

16-119

W?



4 Rf1!!

The only correct place for the rook retreat, as becomes clear from further events.

4…a2 5 Kc4! a1Q 6 Nd3+ Ka2 7 Nb4+ Kb2 8 Rf2+ Kb1

Black does not have 8…Ka3? 9 Nc2+; in case of 8…Kc1, White wins by means of 9 Na2+ Kb1 10 Kb3. If the white rook stood on e2, Black could save the game with 8…Kc1 9 Na2+ Kd1.

9 Kb3+–

If the rook were on g2 or h2, Black could parry the mate threat with 9…Qa7 or 9…Qa8 respectively. Now, however, he cannot do it: the knight controls the a6-square.

15/38. F. Bondarenko, Al. Kuznetsov, 1971*

False ideas are 1 R×b6? Nd5+ or 1 Ra7? N×b5 2 Rb7 Nc6+ 3 Kd7 Ncd4 4 R×b6 Kg5 and Black can hold without much effort.

1 Ra8!! N×a8 2 Kd8 Kg5 3 Kc8+–

The king alone gains the upper hand against two knights!

15/39. J. Fritz, 1953 (corr.)

1 a3!! R×f1+ 2 Ke2 Rf4 (2…Rh1 3 Rd1+; 2…Kc2 3 Rd2+) **3 Rb3+ Ka2 4 Rb4!**+–

In the composers first version, a bishop stood on f1 rather than a knight. But then White can win mundanely because the black king is too unfavorably placed: 1 Rf3 K×a2 2 Kc2.

15/40. A. Kuriatnikov, 1981

1 Re7!!

The line 1 Nb6+? Kb7 2 Kg3 (2 R×e2 Rf5) 2…Kc6 3 Na4 Kb5! △ 4…e1Q leads to a rapid draw. 1 R×e2? Kb7 is also unpromising. As we soon shall see, the rook belongs on e1 in this sort of position.

1…e1Q+

2 Nb6+ was threatened. If 1…Rf4+, then 2 Kg3 Rc4 3 Nb6+ Kd8 4 N×c4 K×e7 5 Kf2+–. In case of 1…Kd8, White wins by means of 2 R×e2 (the king cannot go to b7) 2…Kd7 3 Nb6+ Kc6 4 Re5 Rf1 5 Nc8 Rc1 6 Ne7+.

2 R×e1 Kb7 3 Nb6!

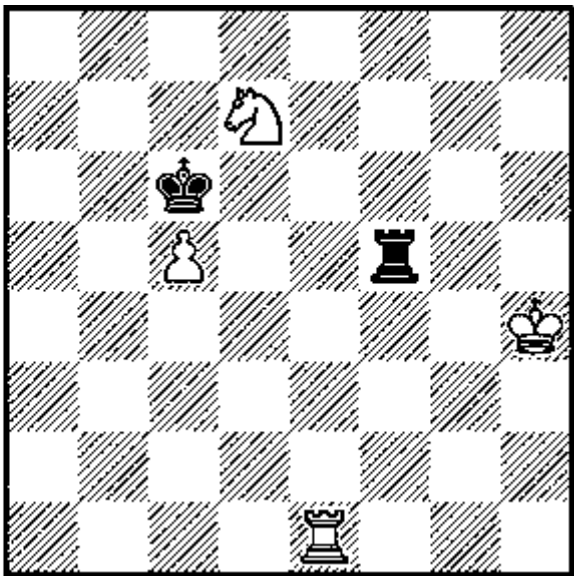
Rather than 3 Ra1? Kc6 4 Ra5 Rf5 5 Ra6+ Kb7 6 Ra5 Kc6=.

3…Rf5 (3…Kc6? 4 Re6+ or 4 Re5) **4 Nd7 Kc6**

4…Rd5 5 Re6! Kc7 6 c6 Rd6 7 R×d6 K×d6 8 Ne5+–.

16-120

W?



5 Rd1? is useless now: 5…Rd5! 6 R×d5 K×d5 7 Kg5 Kc6=. It is an unexpected trapping of the rook that decides.

5 Ne5+! K×c5 6 Kg4!+–

This is why the white rook went to e1! After 1 R×e2?, the black rook would have had a safe square (f1) in the final position.

15/41. V. & M. Platov, 1905

1 Ne6+ Ke8 2 Rb8+ Ke7!

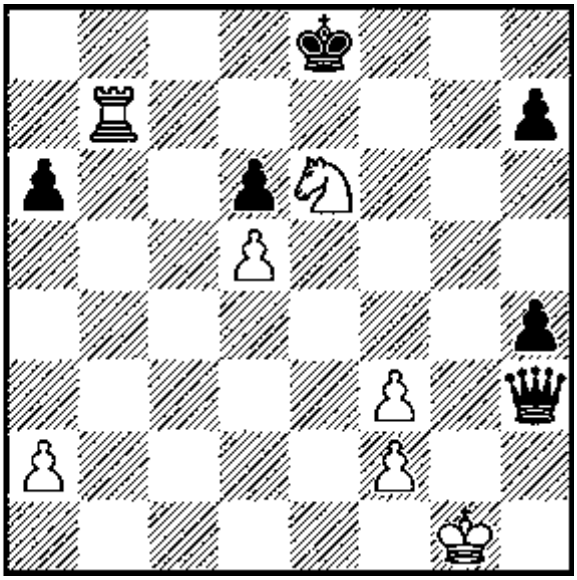
In case of 2…Kd7? 3 Rf8! (with the threat 4 Ng5), White obtains his coveted position immediately, while now he cannot play 3 Rf8? in view of 3…Q×e6!–+.

3 Rb7+! Ke8

An inferior alternative is 3…Kf6 4 Rf7+! Ke5 5 a4 a5 6 Rf8⊙+–.

16-121

W?



4 Rf7!!

The rook is untouchable in view of the knight fork; White deprives the black queen of the f5-square and creates a threat (5 Rf8+ Ke7 6 Ng5+–).

4…h6 5 Rf8+!

After 5 Rf4? Ke7! 6 a3 a5 7 a4 Ke8! 8 Rf8+ Kd7!⊙, White cannot make any progress because he has already spent his reserve tempo on the queenside.

5…Kd7 (5…Ke7 6 Nf4+–) **6 a3! a5 7 a4⊙ Ke7 8 Nf4**+–.

15/42. G. Zakhodiakin, 1948

1 Bb8 Kb7?!

Inarkiev has found that 1…Kb5! is much stronger than this. For example, 2 Kd5 Ng5! 3 Nf6 (3 B×d6 Nf3 followed by 4…Ne1 or 4…Nd4) 3…Nf3 4 Ng4!? Kb4 (4…Ne1? 5 Ne3 Kb4 is erroneous in view of 6 B×d6 Ka3 7 Bg3! N×c2 8 N×c2 Kb2 9 Ne1+–) 5 Ne3 Ka3 6 B×d6 Kb2 and 7…Ne1(d4)=.

2 Kd5 Kc8 3 Kc6!

After the inaccurate 3 Ke6?, Black holds thanks to an attack against White's only pawn: 3…Ng5+! 4 K×d6 Nf3 △ 5…Nd4=.

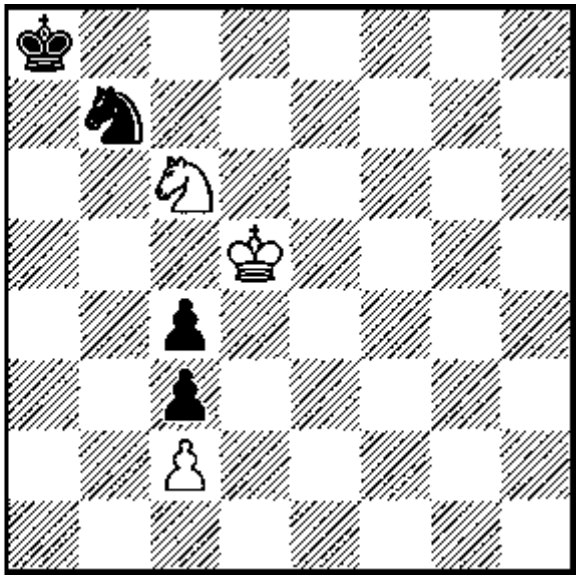
3…Nd8+ 4 K×d6 Kb7!

White has fallen into zugzwang and cannot maintain his extra pawn. 5 Kd5 Kc8 6 Kd6 Kb7 leads to a repetition of moves, while after 5 K×c5? Kc8 6 Kd6 Kb7!, the brilliant idea seen below does not work.

5 Ne5!! K×b8 6 Kd7 Nb7 7 Nc6+ Ka8 8 Ke6! c4 9 Kd5!⊙+–

A picturesque position: Black, with his extra pawn, is completely without moves.

16-122



B

Bibliography

Listed here are books used, to a greater or lesser extent, in writing this book. To a considerable degree, however, the book is based on my extensive collection of endgame positions and analyses, gathered over many years of coaching (my “exercise filing-cabinet” being a part of it), so that I can hardly recall all the primary sources for the positions and analyses included here.

Some of the books listed here are recommended to my readers; these have short synopses appended. Among the rest are some good works, some mediocre and even some obviously poor. Perhaps I should have pointed these out specifically, to warn my readers against buying them. However, in my experience, the least competent authors are often the most vocal and argumentative. I do not want to waste time, either my publisher’s or my own, in pointless squabbles with them in chess periodicals or on the Internet.

Please do not think that I recommend some of my earlier works here out of immodesty. I have never written a book unless I was convinced that I had some important ideas to share with my potential readers, plus some fitting examples to illustrate these ideas, examples which have proven their worth over years of actual chess training. Perhaps it is this approach that has made my books useful to chessplayers of the most varied qualifications, from amateurs to the world’s leading grandmasters.

The approach taken by some authors seems far less productive to me. Sometimes they even write quite frankly, in their prefaces, that they have first chosen a subject, often one quite new to them, and only then started searching for appropriate examples. Within the limited period of a book’s actual writing, it is quite difficult to make a deep investigation into the selected subject plus to collect original and high-quality illustrations.

This list is divided into several sections for clarity. The classification is somewhat arbitrary, since some books fit several descriptions.

Endgame Handbooks

These are books that give a more or less systematic presentation of the whole of endgame theory, or at least some of its chapters. The most complete is undoubtedly the Yugoslavian *Encyclopaedia of Endgames*, but most readers feel more comfortable when thoughts are represented verbally rather than symbolically.

Averbakh, Yuri (editor), *Shakhmatnye okonchaniya*, second edition (in five volumes), Fizkultura I Sport (FiS), Moscow, 1980-1984. A high-quality monograph written by Yuri Averbakh in co-operation with other Soviet endgame authorities. The authors took several earlier endgame handbooks (by R. Fine, M. Euwe, A. Chéron) as starting points and added a great deal of their own creative work, correcting old analyses and providing many new examples.

Levenfish & Smyslov, *Teoriya ladeinykh okonchanii*, 3rd edition, FiS, Moscow, 1986. A classic on the most important parts of endgame theory.

Müller & Lamprecht, *Fundamental Chess Endings*, Gambit Publications Ltd., London, 2001.

Panchenko, Alexander, *Teoriya i praktika shakhmatnykh okonchanii*, Ioshkar-Ola, 1997.

Various authors, *Encyclopaedia of Endgames* (in 5 volumes), Chess Informant, Belgrade, 1982-1993.

Villeneuve, Alain, *Les Finales* (in 2 volumes), Garnier, Paris, 1982-1984.

Analytical Collections

I really appreciate this sort of book because they bring much fresh material, not borrowed from other authors. In addition, their examples are usually well-analyzed and sometimes even well-generalized and explained.

Dvoretsky, Mark, *Shkola vysshego masterstva 1 – Endshpil*, 2nd edition, Kharkov, Ukraine, Folio, 2002. (In English: *School of Chess Excellence 1 – Endgame Analysis*, Edition Olms, Zürich, 2001; In German: *Geheimnisse gezielten Schachtrainings*, Edition Olms, Zürich, 1993.) This was my first book; it was published in 1989 in Russian under the title *Iskusstvo analiza* (The Art of Analysis). In 1991, Batsford Publishers translated it into English under the title *Secrets of Chess Training*; the book then received the British Chess Federation "Book of the Year" award. The new editions, both Russian and English, are considerably corrected and enlarged. The book contains only original endgame analyses by me and my pupils; on this basis, I explain the most important endgame ideas and methods of improving one's chess strength in general, not merely in playing endgames.

Grigoriev, Nikolai, *Shakhmatnoe tvorchestvo N. Grigorieva*, 2nd edition, FiS, Moscow, 1954. The first edition was compiled by Konstantinopolsky and the second by Bondarevsky. Grigoriev was a classic analyst of the endgame, pawn endgames in particular. The book contains his numerous studies, analytical works, and tutorial materials.

Korchnoi, Victor, *Practical Rook Endings*, Edition Olms, Zürich, 2002. The outstanding grandmaster makes an extremely deep investigation of rook endgames from his own games. However, one should realize that the book is complicated, and designed for players of advanced skill.

Lutz, Christopher, *Endgame Secrets*, Batsford, London, 1999.

Endgame Manuals

Amazingly enough, I have not yet found a single endgame manual which I could recommend wholeheartedly to my pupils (the wish to fill this gap stimulated me to write this book). Most existing books are useless methodologically or elementary and useful for novices only. Some books do not cover endgame theory fully – in this case, they are mentioned in the next section

Alburt and Krogius, *Just the Facts!*, 2nd edition, Chess Information and Research Center, New York, 2005.

Averbakh, Yuri, *Chto nado znat' ob endshpile*, 3rd edition, FiS, Moscow, 1979. The English edition of this book is *Chess Endings: Essential Knowledge* (Everyman Chess, London 1993)

Soltis, Andrew, *Grandmaster Secrets – Endings*, Thinker's Press, Davenport, Iowa, 1997. The book is original and fresh, with a good collection of examples, but the author's pedagogical concepts do not inspire my trust.

Books on Various Endgame Themes

In this section of the index, various books are mentioned. Their quality depends not so much on the subject as on the competence of the author, his ability to underline and to explain the most important and instructive ideas.

Beliavsky & Mikhalchishin, *Winning Endgame Technique*, Batsford, London, 2003.
Beliavsky & Mikhalchishin, *Winning Endgame Strategy*, Batsford, London, 2003.
Benko, Pal, *Chess Endgame Lessons* (2 volumes), Self-published, 1989, 1999. Grandmaster Pal Benko is a great connoisseur of endgames and a renowned study composer. The book is a compilation of his monthly columns in the American *Chess Life* magazine. Both theoretical endgames and practical cases from various levels, from amateur to grandmaster, are analyzed.
Nunn, John, *Tactical Chess Endings*, Batsford, London, 2003.
Speelman, Jonathan, *Endgame Preparation*, Batsford, London, 2003. Some important endgame problems and concepts are analyzed, such as zugzwang, the theory of corresponding squares, pawn structure and weak pawns, an extra outside passed pawn, an extra pawn with all pawns on one wing, etc.
Speelman, *Analysing the Endgame*, Batsford, London, 2003.

Books on Endgame Technique

As I have already mentioned in the preface, general endgame technique (and, particularly, the technique of exploiting an advantage) is beyond the scope of this book, although its important principles are described here more than once. A more systematic presentation of endgame technique can be obtained from the books named below.

Dvoretsky & Yusupov, *Tekhnika v shakhmatnoi igre*, 3rd edition, Folio, Kharkov, Ukraine, 2009. (In English: *Secrets of Endgame Technique*, Olms, Zürich, 2008. In German: *Effektives Endspieltraining*, Beyer Verlag, 1996.) One of the main themes of the book is the problem of technique, although there are also chapters on other subjects, such as methods of improving one's endgame play, theory of certain types of endgame, etc.
Mednis, Edmar, *Practical Endgame Lessons*, Three Rivers Press, New York, 1986. The author's views on basic endgame techniques seem at first sight very different from mine and Shereshevsky's, but in fact they are very close to ours. This book is perhaps not so deep as Shereshevsky's, but is more attractive and accessible.
Shereshevsky, Mikhail, *Strategiya endshpilya*, FiS, Moscow, 1988. The English edition of this book is *Endgame Strategy* (Everyman Chess, London, 1994). This book has already been mentioned in the preface. The author explains the main principles of endgame technique and gives numerous illustrative examples.

Endgame Materials in Various Publications

Only the most important of the many sources I have used are mentioned here.

Belavenets, Sergey, *Master Sergey Belavenets*, FiS, Moscow, 1963. The book includes tutorial lectures on endgames that Belavenets had prepared shortly before the Second World War (in which he was killed). The lectures are very good, and gave me (and later, Shereshevsky) an impetus to prepare our own tutorial materials on endgame technique.
Dvoretsky, Mark, *Shkola vysshego masterstva 3 – Strategiya*, Folio, Kharkov, Ukraine, 1998 (In English: *School of Chess Excellence 3 – Strategic Play*, Edition Olms, Zürich, 2008. In German: *Geheimnisse der Schachstrategie*, Edition Olms, Zürich, 1999.) The first and largest part of the book is dedicated to various aspects of positional play; the second part handles positions with limited material, mainly problems of technique.

Nunn, John, *Secrets of Practical Chess*, 2nd edition, Gambit, London, 2008. This relatively small book, with an enlarged, second edition appearing in 2007, contains practical advice on many problems important for a practical player. The endgame section of the book is, in my opinion, slightly below the level of other chapters, but the professional and intellectual level of Nunn's work as a whole is so high that I can recommend it without reservation to every chessplayer, whatever his level.

Shereshevsky, Mikhail, *The Soviet Chess Conveyor*, Sofia, 1994.

Chess Informant

Chess magazines: *64, Shakhmaty v SSSR, New in Chess*, etc.

Index of Players

Numbers in **bold** denote that the player named first had White. Numbers in brackets denote that the game was also discussed or mentioned in the text of the bracketed diagram number.

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